RISABHA DEVA

THE FOUNDER OF JAINISM

Champat Rai Jain



COLOSSUS OF RIṢABHA DEVA AT BAṚWANI
(MUCH DAMAGED BY AGE)

RIṢABHA DEVA

THE

FOUNDER OF JAINISM

BY

CHAMPAT RAI JAIN

VIDYAVARIDHI, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

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आदि पुरुष आदीश जिन आदि सुविधि कर्तार ।
धर्म धुरन्धर परम गुरु नमूँ आदि अवतार ॥

To the first PERFECT MAN, the Lord of Conquerors, the first most Excellent Arranger of things, the support of Dharma, the Supreme Teacher,

Salutation!

FOREWORD

Riṣabha Deva was the Founder of Jainism in the present half-cycle of time. He was a man, but became Immortal and a Tirthamkara (Teaching God), and taught the Path of Perfection to others. Innumerable souls have benefited by his Teaching. There have been twenty-three subsequent Tirthamkaras who re-affirmed His doctrine. He flourished very very far back in the remoteness of hoary antiquity. His life story will be delineated in the following pages. The account is based on the Jaina scripture entitled the Ādi Purāṇa. Help has also been taken from an excellent but all too brief abridgment of the Ādi Purāṇa prepared by Mr. Behari Lal Chaitanya. The date of Riṣabha Deva's age is simply un-fixable; all that can be said about His time is that it was anterior to all forms of rational religion; for all mythologies, all allegories, of all lands and peoples, that have a rational interpretation, yield only fragments of the Truth taught by Him, when properly interpreted, and would be quite unintelligible and misleading without the light of His Word. The Jaina chronology places Him at an almost immeasurable antiquity in the past ;

but it is under suspicion of being too methodical in its computations. The Hindus, who recognize the Tirthamkara as one of the incarnations of Viṣṇu, hold that he appeared shortly after the formation of the world, and that no less than twenty-eight *yugas* (cycles) have elapsed since then. All that can be said definitely about His age, then, is that He flourished very very far back in the hoariest of hoary antiquity; and that He was prior to all systematized forms of religion!

C. R. JAIN.

MARIE VILLA,
Simla. 19th May. 1929.

INTRODUCTION

Religion originated with man; the first deified man in every cycle of time is the founder of Religion. Yet as a science, Religion is eternal; for all sciences are really eternal!

That Religion is a science, need not astonish us. It is either a fact, grounded on a fact, or a fiction. There is no intermediate state between fiction and fact. Whatever is definite, certain and reliable is always fact; what cannot be conceived definitely and clearly and is consequently unreliable is not a fact! Fact is ever amenable to rational explanation and scientific treatment!

The immortal soul that is to become deified into a God later on in its migratory career, is led to cultivate such powerful virtues as Study, Faith, Love, Veneration, Service, Mercy and the like. In this way it becomes qualified for deification. Amongst the Deified Ones those who have been *consumed by a burning desire* to remove the suffering of their fellow-beings and to carry enlightenment and comfort to their hearts become the Tirthamkaras. They may be called Teaching Gods.

Tirthamkaras have only appeared amongst the Aryan races. They are Omniscient, all-conquering (in the spiritual sense), and attain to all the most coveted Perfections that the imagination of man is able to conceive. On the attainment of Omniscience They commence their *upadeśa* (Instruction). Amongst the non-Aryans no one has ever clearly claimed that humanity has attained or may attain to Full Knowledge and Godhood. Their gods are all descended from heaven, ready-made, so to speak. They are mythological, without exception. It is not the accepted teaching of any of the non-Aryan Religions that man can and does become the all-knowing, all-perceiving, ever-blissful God. Indeed, they are all anxious to maintain the supremacy of a solitary imaginary god whom they regard as the creator and the manager of the world—a claim which they are, however, now abandoning in the presence of modern science, bit by bit, though not without a struggle, to be sure. The *man-made* Aryan Religion, like the modern science, refuses and has always refused to acknowledge the existence of a creative or managing god in the universe. It reduces everything to the iron laws of nature! Faith, observance, as well as emotion, and inner experience, all come thus under the jurisdiction of systematized

thought. This is naturally the main feature of a science!

Religion, then, is a science, and originated amongst the Aryans. Amongst the Aryans, it originated with the Jains: not with the non-Jaina Aryans. There are non-Jaina Aryans, too, but it did not have its origin with them. They, too, are entangled in the superstition of creative godhood, and pray to a world-manager for their material and spiritual wants! They, too, make no claim that religion was founded by *man*. Divine revelation, rather than *man's* discourse, is claimed by them as the source of their creeds! Surely, there is no feature of scientific thought presented in all this. Who founded religion? Was he a man or some non-human being, who descended from heaven? What did he teach (in a scientific way)? Did any one benefit by his teaching, and become like him *in all respects*? are questions which find no satisfactory answer outside Jainism, whether amongst the Aryans or the other races of men.

In Jainism alone will the seeker find a complete answer to all the above questions. Religion is founded by MAN. It is a perfect science. There is no creator of the world; and no one to grant the prayers of humanity! By following Religion man may become in all respects

like the Teacher. Periodically other Teachers —small and great ones, both—arise and re-affirm the principles of Truth. Jainism can give the biographies of a very large number of souls that have become deified, and are now living in *nirvaṇa*, enjoying such supremely divine and worshipful attributes as Omniscience, Immortality, unending, uninterrupted, uninterruptable, unabating Bliss!

Jainism alone, then, is the Scientific Religion, discovered and disclosed by man, for the benefit of man, and the advantage of all other living beings!

Mythological religions, too, will support the teaching of Jainism wherever they are found to be still adhering to the grain of the truth pushed and buried under fiction and fable. All mythologies, as a matter of fact, started with the teaching of truth as taught by the Tirthamkaras. This is but natural. From its very nature Scientific Religion could not have been a hole and corner affair. The attainment of divinity by man was not intended to be kept and could not be kept a secret. Its doctrines were bound to spread—comparatively, very slowly in those early days of the bullock cart and the camel *caravan*. You would, however, get mere fragments, rather than detailed instruction, the fur-

ther you travelled from the Enlightening Source. This is precisely what is to be found in the mythologies of the world to-day. Bits and fragments are to be found so disconnected and disjointed that it is almost a Herculean task to refit them into their proper shape. The true principles of the interpretation of the different mythologies and scriptures of the world have been explained in my earlier works, ' The Key of Knowledge,' ' The Confluence of Opposites,' and others. If any one would study religion, as a science ought to be studied, he would not, I am confident, differ from what has been said in those books, concerning the nature of religion and the interpretation of the world's scriptures.

Full, penetrating, all-elucidating light is only to be found in Jainism. Let us, however, not misdirect ourselves on the subject, and look out in the existing records of Jainism for a complete or perfectly untampered account of the Instruction of Truth, as imparted by the first or even by the last Tirthamkara, Mahavira. Mahavira flourished something like two thousand five hundred years ago. Jainism has experienced many vicissitudes since. Bitter persecution of Jainas at the hands of the devotees and members of the rival faiths characterized many centuries of the Jaina history in the past. Jaina Scriptures

later were used to kindle the fires in the baths of the invading foreign potentates. Much has, in this way, disappeared of the teaching of truth. Much had already been lost ere this on account of the growing inability of men to retain in their memories the whole of the Teaching of Truth, which was for the first time reduced to writing long long after Mahavira. Interpolations, embodying Brahmanical ritual, would also appear to have been made in some of the Jaina Books, to soften and appease Brahmanical hatred. Probably this was the only means left under the circumstances of preserving the Faith and the community of the Faithful. Some of the Hindu gods also were given minor seats in the Jaina temples, about this time, with a similar motive. They are termed *Kshetrapāla* (the Protectors of the place). They certainly protected the temples from Hindu fury; but failed against the Muslim onslaught. Hindu converts into Jainism were also not unlikely to introduce (quite unwittingly and with the best of motives of course) their earlier impressions of the Hindu mythology into the Jaina Tradition. All this is quite natural and intelligible on natural grounds. But notwithstanding all these drawbacks, Jainism is still able to present a dignified religion and a doctrine that is altogether scientific in its exposition, and

which furnishes a practical solution of all of life's true problems that religion is concerned with. It is at once a science, a religion, a philosophy, and a soul-elevating ritual. As such, it is capable of raising the worst sinner to the full status and dignity of Divinity in the course of, comparatively speaking, a short time.

The final test of real Truth, I think, should be the ability of a system to reconcile all others, that contain the truth or the grain of truth. This, I can say, is a feature of Jainism alone, as has been demonstrated in the books that have been named already. Any one can, no doubt, claim this privilege for his faith; but we do not want mere talk of large-heartedness and all that sort of thing. No one who has pinned his faith to mythology, whether it assume the monotheistic or polytheistic form or any other, can ever reconcile himself to others or become the medium of the reconciliation of others. The Jaina doctrine of Relativity of Thought it is which is able to accomplish this feat; nothing else ever will!

Jainism originated in India. This is evident from the Jaina Books. Besides this two other considerations fully support the Jaina view in this respect. The first is the philological, and the second mythological. Much has already been said on the first point by earlier investigators,

European and Indian both, to show that traces of Sanskrit derivation are to be found in the different languages in a great many countries of the world. Now, some of these investigators thought that the home of the Aryan race must have been somewhere in Central Asia to enable the subsequent divergences to spread out in all directions. The argument does not appeal to my mind, and has not appealed to the minds of many another thinker. There is no place in Central Asia (indeed, anywhere outside India) which can be put down as the home of Sanskrit or of any other language capable of giving birth to it. India, on the other hand, actually is the home of Sanskrit even to-day! The other consideration which I regard as conclusive is what I have termed mythological. This is based upon the undoubted presence in the mythologies of the world of the "grain of Truth," that is to say, of the Tirthamkara's teaching about the nature of the soul, about its inherent divinity, about transmigration and *karma*, and about the soul's ability to obtain *nirvana*. Now, it is certain that in no other part of the World than India was this teaching given out. In other countries you come across mythology, not science; and a Tirthamkara would never preach mythology or resort to mythological language to spread His doctrine. This is so

because mythology, on account of its endeavour to conceal and disguise the truth under the attractive garb of allegory, is sure to mislead humanity in the end. All the chief religious quarrels of men have risen, without exception, through mythology, and will end completely the moment it is thrown away by men. This makes it quite clear that the source of Truth could never have arisen outside Jainism or outside India. Probably the mythological allegorising took place for the first time in India. Some of the followers of the Tirthamkara's creed took to allegorising at a time when there were no Omniscient Teachers to warn them, and the pastime proved very attractive. They were followed by others. Huge pantheons soon rose, outsiders also copying Aryan allegorists. Later a sharp division occurred between the Scientific section and the mythologists. The descendants of the former are termed Jainas to-day; those who allegorised first of all are the Hindus!

Thus, no other country than India can be found that may be termed the birth-place of both the Sanskrit language and of the Religion of the people who spoke that tongue. India, then, must be the real home of the Aryans. It came to be known as Bhāratvarṣa after Bharata who was the first great *Chakravarti* (the term signifies a

great Emperor) of the Aryans and the son of the first Tirthamkara, Riṣabha Deva. Both the Hindu and the Jaina traditions maintain this view. The so-called aborigines are really not the original residents of India. There have been several influxes into India in the past, according to Jainism. A very large number of men from other countries came into India with Bharata himself, when he returned from his world-conquest. Then there was a very determined invasion from the north in subsequent times which, however, ended in a 'stale mate,' both parties settling down in the land. These mainly are the important influxes, according to the past tradition, and no reason can be found for rejecting the account altogether. The other considerations are all minor ones and will not affect the two main arguments that have been advanced above, in support of this view, one way or the other.

The Hindus allegorised Religion itself as Riṣabha, and included Him amongst the incarnations of their chief divinity, Viṣṇu. They also make use of the Tirthamkara's distinguishing mark, namely, the bull, as a symbol for Religion, thus implicitly acknowledging Him as the founder of Religion proper (see 'The Confluence of Opposites,' Lecture vii, and the 'Permanent History of Bharatvarsha,' Vol. I, p. 213).

CHAPTER I

GLIMPSES ALONG LIFE'S JOURNEY SOME PREVIOUS INCARNATIONS.

1. Jaya Varma

" Arise and conquer while ye can,
The foe that in your midst resides;
And build within the mind of man,
The Empire that abides."

W. Watson.

Long, incalculably long, long, ago, Śri Sen was the king of Indrapuri, in the country of Gandhilā. His queen was Sundari, who was really very beautiful, as the name implied. From her Śri Sen had two sons, Jaya Varmā and Ṣri Varmā who was the younger. The parents were very fond of their younger son, and appointed him their successor. Any other prince in place of Jaya Varmā would have resented this unkindly act, and revolted against the parental authority. But Jaya Varmā was a different being. He did not cherish resentment or disaffection towards the authors of his being, and did not seek to oust his

younger brother from the throne. The incident merely filled him with renunciation; he was seized with the spirit of world-flight, and sought refuge at the feet of a Jaina Saint. He was duly admitted in the order, and earned much merit as a *yogi* (ascetic), by practising the twelve kinds of asceticism, internal and external. One day he was bitten by a serpent and died of the venom. Jaya Varmā did not attempt to kill the vermin and cherished no resentment in his heart. He reincarnated as a son to Atibala, king of Alkāpuri, from his queen Manoharā. The fruit of asceticism usually is a birth in the heavens; but Jaya Varmā failed to secure it, because at the moment of death he was swayed by the kingly pomp and splendour of a great Vidyādhar whom he had seen just about that time, which had made him long for similar conditions for himself in his next *incarnation!*

2. Mahabala

Alkāpuri is situated on a hill in one of the *distant Provinces of the Jambu Dvipa.* Sahasrabala was at one time the king of this place. When he became old he took to *sannyāsa* (asceticism), to look after his spiritual well-being. His son Śatabala succeeded him, and, after a long and prosperous reign, followed in the foot-

steps of his father, and renounced the world. Atibala, his son, then became the king of Alkāpuri. He married the fair princess Manoharā. The soul of Jaya Varmā took birth as a son to Atibala and Manoharā, as stated above. They called him Mahābala.

Atibala was a great king, but he, too, at the appearance of the signs of old age, took to asceticism, to rid himself of the enemy, *karma*. Mahābala succeeded him. As the fruit of his previous life's asceticism, Mahābala was endowed with many great virtues and was surrounded by all kinds of splendours and the good things of the world. For a long time he enjoyed life and was much respected by all.

Mahābala was not only a great king; he was also a great thinker. He had four ministers who favoured four different creeds. These were: Mahāmati, who was a *materialist*, Sambhinnamati, who held that things were unreal, being really only so many 'ideas'; Śātamati, who maintained the doctrine of voidness; and Svayambuddha, who was a Jaina. The family religion of the king, too, was Jainism; but Svayambuddha felt much anxiety about him, and wanted to turn his thoughts definitely towards *dharma* (religion), so that the possession of wealth might not stand in the way of the future prosperity of his soul.

One day the king was celebrating his birthday with great pomp. All the leading chieftains under him were present in his court, and the splendour was unequalled. Svayambuddha seized hold of a suitable opportunity to turn the conversation towards the great need for turning to religion. "All pomp and prosperity," he said, "were due to merit acquired in the previous life. Those who squander away their time in the pursuit of pleasure have to put up with much misfortune in the future. Intolerable suffering is the lot of those who are vicious, and who do not mend their ways. Your glory, O king! is entirely the reward of the merit earned by you in your past life. Let this thought spur your majesty on to greater effort for the conquest of the lower nature. For without *tapas* (austerities) no merit can be acquired by the soul!"

"Not so, friend Svayambuddha!" broke in Mahāmati, the materialist, "there is no good in afflicting oneself with *tapaścharaṇa*. For whose benefit are the hardships to be endured? For the soul's? Bah! I tell you there is no such thing as a soul! No one has ever seen one; and you cannot prove its existence to me today. One should enjoy his days to the best of his ability; for there is a complete end when once the vital flame is extinguished."

"And I tell you," interposed Sambhinnamati, "what you call the reality of nature is only a bundle of 'ideas.' There are no things or objects; what you see is only thought! Why, then, run after such imaginary shadows as life after death? Why waste your energies in thus pursuing the will o' the wisp? Why not be happy with what you have got, and make the best of it?"

It was the turn of Śatamati now, and he was not slow to preach his favourite doctrine of voidness. 'There is nothing permanent; nothing that can be said to be everlasting; extinction is the goal of all. What is the good of embarking on such a wild goose's chase as eternal life in *nirvana*?'

Svayambuddha heard all that his three colleagues had to say against his faith. When they ceased talking, he said, "Sire, the reality of the soul is not open to doubt or dispute. It is not a mere theory that I have set before your majesty; in your own illustrious family there is much biographical matter to demonstrate the truth of the doctrine of the creed. Look at that beautiful string of heavenly gems that is encircling your majesty's neck! Was it not given to an illustrious ancestor of yours by a resident of the *Devaloka* (heavens)? And who was that *deva*

who gave it to Maṇimāli, if not his own father who had re-incarnated in heavens in his third incarnation? I will tell you, sir, the story of this beautiful necklace, though you have heard it ere this, no doubt. In his human incarnation as Maṇimāli's father the *deva* was called Danda. He was a powerful king, and was very fond of the pleasures of life, so much so that he made over his throne to his son and abandoned himself to pleasure-seeking with his whole heart. At last he died, and in consequence of the predominance of the animal nature was reborn as a huge serpent in his own treasury. There the sight of his own riches stimulated his recollection, and he recovered the memory of his past life. He was filled with sorrow, and overwhelmed with grief at the unhappy condition in which he found himself. About that time Maṇimāli learnt from a clairvoyant saint that his father had re-incarnated in his own palace, as a monster snake, and had also recovered the memory of his past life. He went to the Treasury chamber, sat down quietly there before the snake, and, amid much sorrow and regret, explained to him the nature of the scientific *dharma* (Jainism) which alone is helpful to a soul in distress. The serpent followed him attentively, and was fully convinced of the folly of a life of pleasure, and sense-grati-

fication. He at once adopted the minor vows of the *dharma*, and renouncing food and water immediately settled down to perform the *sallekhanā* vow. In due course he shook off his serpentine coil, and was immediately reborn among the *devas*, as the result of the severe asceticism implied in the accomplishment of the *sallekhanā* death. The *devas* are all endowed with clairvoyance from birth, and Danda's *jiva* (soul) found out that the cause of his great good luck was his son, Maṇimāli, whose preaching had changed his heart. He then came to thank his son personally, and presented him with this divine necklace, which has descended to your majesty in due course! Such is the history of your great ancestor, Danda. Can you after this doubt that there is a survival of the soul after death? Any one in your kingdom will vouch for the truth of this matter, as it is not a very old one.

"I will yet tell you the story of your own great-grandfather, Sahasrabala. How he renounced the world, made over his kingdom to your majesty's grandfather, and, taking to saintly life, became omniscient and obtained salvation, are known to one and all throughout the length and breadth of your kingdom. Nay they impressed your wise grandfather so much that he, too, renounced the world and became an ascetic, and,

as clairvoyant saints will tell your majesty, is now that he is dead here living in one of the higher heavens! Your majesty's own father, Atibala, who is still in the flesh, is likewise seeking to enter *nirvana*, which he will do in this very life. All this is the result of severe self-denial on the proper *dharmic* path. On the other hand, we have seen how evil leads to degradation in the scale of life in the case of King Danda, who reincarnated as a serpent, in consequence of abandoning himself to excessive sense-indulgence. There is also the story of King Arabinda who was attacked with some hideous form of disease and who wanted to bathe himself in the blood of animals, because he had discovered, accidentally, that blood relieved his suffering. Accordingly he asked his son, Kurubinda, to dig a tank and to fill it up with the blood of animals. But Kurubinda had a good heart, and would not sacrifice so many innocent lives, even to please his father. He, therefore, had a tank dug and filled with reddish-coloured water. Arabinda discovered the deception practised by his son, and, boiling with rage, ran, with a drawn sword in his hand, to kill him. His cup of evil was, however, now full to the brim; he fell in his haste, and was pierced with his own weapon. His soul passed into the regions known, on account of the terrible condi-

tions of existence that prevail there, as hells; and there he is still!"

After Svayambuddha ceased speaking, there was complete silence for some time. The audience were much impressed; but the king did not say anything on the subject, and kept his thoughts to himself. Svayambuddha, who only desired the good of his royal master, did not find his anxiety eased, and sought to find out in some way, if he could, the real state of the king's thoughts on the subject. One day he met two clairvoyant saints who were called Adityagati and Arinjaya, and related his trouble to them. The saints told him that the king had only a month left to live, that he was a great soul and would become the first Tirthamkara in a future cycle of time in his tenth re-birth! They also told him that he had seen two dreams during the night, which they described to him, and advised him to go to him and to tell him his dreams and their interpretation, which they also told him. So Svayambuddha immediately sought the presence of his master.

"I have come," he said, "to give your majesty news that is very important, indeed. But first of all let me relate to you the two dreams which you dreamed last night. You saw yourself thrown into deep mud and bogs, in the first dream, by my three colleagues, your majesty's ministers, and saw

me help you out of it. In the other one you saw a burning flame, gradually becoming paler, till it was extinguished. The purport of the first of these dreams, sire, is that the doctrine that I have promulgated before your majesty, the noble and ennobling creed of the Jinas (Conquerors), in other words, is to help you to attain *nirvana*. I rejoice to tell you that you will become the first Tirthaṃkara of your time in Bhāratvarṣa in your tenth incarnation from this. The interpretation of the second dream is tinged with sadness and sorrow for me. It means that the spark of life in your present body will be extinguished in a month's time! "

Svayambuddha then narrated the story of his interview with the saints to the king, who was surprised to find his dreams being known to one of his ministers. The king was much affected by the information thus miraculously furnished; and determined from that very moment to embark on the voyage of soul's prosperity along the path of *sannyāsa*. He gave away costly gifts to the deserving, made arrangements for the care of his kingdom, and prepared for the noble *sallekhanā*, the end that is sought by all the truly great.

3. Lalitanga

Jainism shows heavens (as also hells) to be but separate regions of the universe. The one is no more a pleasure garden kept by a supreme king-like god, than the other is a prison-Siberia of a divine cæsar or czar. Conditions of existence are very very pleasant in the heavens; but the hells are constituted by those regions which are the reverse of heavens.

Souls take birth in heavens (also in hells) as they do here; but there is no conception to be undergone. People rise up from a 'bed' in the heavens; they drop down from a circular bell-like orifice in hells. Their growth is accomplished almost at once—in less than eight and forty minutes—and the bodies are indestructible, that is, there is no premature death in either heavens or hells. No doubt, you can cut up or divide the body in either place, but it is re-formed immediately; only the pain is felt and there is no permanent mutilation or deprivation of an organ or limb. The residents of heavens possess the outer bodies of a type that is bright and resplendent, and that readily obeys the impulses of the owner's will. It can become big or small, light or heavy, at will; it can pass through space at a rate of speed that will put the motion of light to shame. All the residents of heavens are endowed with clairvoy-

ance from birth. All this is due simply to the fact that the material of their bodies is not gross like ours; it is ethereal. The conditions in hells are different; but we are not concerned with their description here. For the present let us turn to the fate of the soul whom we left engaged in the observance of the *sallekhanā* death.

Mahābala understood full well the importance of the time that was still left to him for the shaping of his destiny for the future well-being of his soul. He devoted the whole of that period to the eradication of his lower nature, the subduing of his passions and emotional propensities, and the suppression of private loves and hatreds. He worked under the guidance of Svayambuddha all the time. The latter was now his spiritual counsellor, as he had been his temporal councillor (minister) when he was a king. Holy meditation, adoration of the Great Tirthamkaras, of the Liberated Ones, of Saints and Preceptors and the ordinary Sadhus (ascetics), collectively termed *Pancha-Parameṣṭhi*, recitation of the great obeisance *mantram* and the cultivation of the spirit of detachment from the physical body occupied his time, to the exclusion of all other thoughts. He began by giving up solid food at once; gradually other kinds of diet were also abandoned. Thereafter his sustenance con-

sisted only of the ambrosia of *dharma* (the teaching of Truth)! He cultivated, to perfection, the spirit of mercy and compassion for all, especially for those who were unable to take care of themselves. He would not touch anything of worldly goods now, except written scripture describing the teaching of the *dharma*. Even this he would handle extremely carefully to see that by his carelessness he should not cause hurt or harm to some tiny specimen of life that might be hiding about or under it. He practised the ten noble virtues, forgiveness, meekness, straightforwardness, and the like, that are the characteristics of the true *dharma*. He also practised self-control with regard to the activities of his body, mind and speech. In this way excellence after excellence was attained by him in the course of that month. Internal peace, strength of character, soul-force came to him, as if in exchange for worldly greatness and kingly pomp. His mind was at rest; he understood the nature of things, and acquired unruffled mental calm in consequence of the understanding!

Thus, the end of the month found him a well-wisher of all, a hater of none! It also found him firmly established in the spirit of renunciation and filled with *śānti* (tranquillity) that nothing could disturb.

As *sallekhanā* ripened into accomplishment, culminating in the separation of the old companions—the spirit and the body of flesh—a movement was noticed among the lovely 'draperies' of the birth-bed in the heavens. Instantly the *devas* surrounded the heavenly throne, and took their stand in due form round it. A great *deva* was expected to grace the heavens!

Only a moment intervened between the departure of the great spirit from the body of flesh and the returning of consciousness. Mahābala, now embodied in the ethereal matter of the celestial regions, opened but again 'closed' his eyes at once. The splendour of *deva*-life was too much for his consciousness. He wondered where he was. Perhaps it was a dream that he beheld. But whatever it was, it was very fascinating! He got, however, little or no time to think; the organising forces were still at work furiously. "Ah, I now recollect," he said to himself, "I am Mahābala!" It was the faculty of clairvoyance which had matured in the interval. He opened his eyes, got up, and was overwhelmed with the delightful scenery of the heavens and the attentions of the *devas* and the heavenly nymphs!

Mahābala was now called Lalitānga (literally, of attractive limbs). He got up, and, remem-

bering that his good fortune was due to the effect of the practising of *dharma*, went to worship the Tirthamkaras in the Temples of the *devaloka* (heavens). Thence he returned and settled down to the *deva*-life which is like one continuous feast of pleasure.

There is nothing of labour or industry known in the abodes of *devas*. They do not have to sweat themselves for their livelihood. The food that their ethereal bodies need is not like that of the mortals. In the lower heavens it is taken once in a thousand years. The quantity, too, is what would barely suffice the gluttony of a sparrow on the earth. Amongst the many wonders of the *deva*-life is the fact that the *devas* of the lowest heavens breathe but once in a fortnight. In the higher heavens the interval between meals and breaths increases proportionately.

Fun and frolic characterise the life of those who find themselves so placed as to have nothing whatsoever to do. There is not even public work to be done in the heavens, as there are no needy folk there. The troubles are only mental—jealousy at the greater brilliance and beauty of another *deva*, and the like. But no one can alleviate such suffering.

In the lower heavens both the sexes are represented; though the *deva*-ladies do not

conceive or give birth to children. They form companionate marriages, and spend their time in ease and happiness. The little food that is needed is obtained from certain kinds of trees, that do not need to be grown or looked after.

The softer sex, it would seem, is represented much more numerously in the heavens than the other one. It may be that women are given to the practising of self-denying austerities in a greater measure than men all the world over, and, therefore, readily reach heavens in larger numbers. However that may be, there are a larger number of *deva*-ladies than *devas*, in the lower heavens.

Mahābala, too, had four thousand companionate wives, in the second heaven. But his favourite *devāngnā* (queen) was the beautiful Svayam Prabhā, who was passionately devoted to him. She was a very lovely lady. The two were almost always together, and found much joy in each other's company. Together they would resort to the celestial pleasances, and roam about, hand in hand, over hill and dale, inhaling the beauty of nature, the beauty which the mortal eye has not seen nor the mortal ear heard of. Together, too, they would go to worship the God Arhant Deva (Tirthamkara) in the Celestial Fanes. In this way they spent the incalculably

long time of the *deva*-life enjoying each other's company, and linking up, unwittingly and automatically, their future destinies!

It is a law of stern nature that all things that are not simple substances have sooner or later to experience dissolution. The *deva*-body is also a compound, and not free from the liability to dissolution and disintegration for that reason. The soul alone is a simple, hence an immortal, item in the compound of spirit and matter termed embodied life. True, the *deva*-body is indestructible from external causation; but it is not eternal, and must perish when the forces responsible for the association of spirit and matter in embodied life cease to function from within.

When six months of life remain, the signs of approaching end appear in the *deva*-body. The garland of flowers that is placed round the neck is the first to fade away. Bodily lustre is then affected and begins to deteriorate. One morning Lalitānga, too, noticed the saddening signs in his body. There was no mistaking them; they were there to give a warning of the approaching end! He was filled with dismay. The thought of the joys that he will be denied after six months made him sorrowful. Svayam Prabhā and others, however, consoled him. The King of the six-

teenth heaven who was his friend, then took him to his own region, where Lalitānga spent his closing hours, worshipping the Divinity in the Temples of *Jinas* (Conquerors).

Svayam Prabhā was much distressed by the death of Lalitānga. But she was somewhat relieved to discover that her own end was to take place six months later, and soon resigned herself to stern fate. She spent those remaining months of her *deva*-life in constant worship and veneration of the *Jina's* statues in one of the Heavenly Temples. Thus did she prepare herself for the coming, ' dissolution ' of her *deva*-form.

4. Bajrajangha

In the East Videha of the Jambu Dvipa, there is a country known as Puṣkalāvati. Utpala-khetaka and Pundarikini are two important kingdoms in it. Emperor Bajradanta reigned in the last-named kingdom; his sister's husband, Bajrabāhu, was the king of the other. On the termination of the *deva*-life Lalitānga was born a son to Bajrabāhu from his queen Basundharā. Bajrabāhu called his son Bajrajangha. The name was quite appropriate because the *janghās* (thighs) of Bajrajangha were supremely beautiful and strong. Bajrabāhu also had a daughter whom he called Anundhari.

Svayam Prabhā's soul, too, descended from heaven and was born in Puṣkalāvati. She became the daughter of the Emperor Bajradanta, who called her Śrimati. She had a brother, Amitateja.

Śrimati was a very beautiful girl. Her face was like the full moon in brightness. Her manners were very engaging. She received a good education, and grew up into a very charming young lady, the daughter of the greatest king of her times.

People did not marry their children at an early age in those ancient days. This practice grew up under the stress of necessity when the non-Aryans came and established themselves and their slaughter houses and 'bloody' altars all over the land. To raise man-power it was found desirable to allow no capable female to remain unproductive. It was then that people said: 'If your daughter is unmarried at the time when the flow of blood appears you will go to hell with the whole of your kinsmen and clan.' This was literally true. For if the ranks of the fighting men were not filled up, and the people were carried off captives and slaves of war, what else was to be expected? They would be forced to abandon their faith: kill poor innocent living beings for their master's table, and be forced to eat flesh

themselves! Some wise man, knowing that the consequences of such a terrible change can only be a descent into hell of all those concerned, and not unoften of many who were not directly concerned in not assisting in the procreation of fighting men, laid it down, as a scriptural injunction, that every girl must be married before she become menstruant. But this was not so in the days of purely Aryan culture.

Śrimati grew up into loveliness and youth, without any one thinking it necessary to marry her before the appearance of the signs of full mature puberty. One morning as she awoke from her sleep, she heard a great commotion, music and voices mingling up indistinctly. She enquired the cause, and learnt that during the night Śri Yaśodharji Saint had attained Omniscience, and the *devas* from the Celestial regions were coming down to worship the Holy One. It was the sound of their *jaya-kārās* (hurrahs of 'Victory') which, combined with the heavenly music, formed the hubbub that she had heard. Śrimati then saw the *devas* herself coming down and going up in the sky. The sight stirred her deeply; it touched a deep-seated chord somewhere in her heart. She recollected all at once her past life as Svayam Prabhā! She remembered Lalitānga, too, and was reminded of the joys she had experi-

enced in his company. The recollection of such a past was, surely, too much for her to bear; she fainted right away. When she came to she was so much overwhelmed with misery that it was impossible to explain it to any one. She, therefore, held her peace; but determined in her mind to find out, if possible, where Lalitānga was born, and to marry none else but him.

Her parents noticed the change that had come over her; but she did not tell them its cause. Who could be expected to sympathise with such a wild goose's scheme as hers or to encourage such a resolve? But Svayam Prabhā's was not an ordinary soul. She felt that the affinity between herself and her *deva*-lover would in all probability not admit of her taking birth far away from him. She was now doubly determined to leave no stone unturned in search of her past-life's lover.

Her father one day, finding no change in her melancholy, gave her a new nurse who was very highly gifted. The newcomer proved to be a real companion and whole-heartedly entered into Svayam Prabhā's plans.

There was a big Temple called Mahāpūta Chaityālaya in her father's kingdom. Śrimati's nurse one day took a painting executed by Śrimati, her mistress, to this Temple, and placed it on the wall in the picture gallery there. It was a series

of panels of scenes from her *deva*-life which Śrimati had reproduced on the canvas. For days the picture hung on the wall, with the nurse watching by its side to catch the remarks of the spectators. Many passed by taking no notice of the picture; some cut jokes at what they termed the 'silly ideas' of the artist. Two men on one occasion thought that the picture represented scenes from *deva*-life, and guessed the purpose of the display. But they failed in the test which had been subtly contrived by the lovely artist, and went away crest-fallen before the nurse.

At last the search was rewarded. The handsome prince Bajrajangha came one day to the Temple to worship the Jinas, and sauntered into the picture gallery after the devotions. He was attracted by the picture, and as he looked at the scenic detail a great agitation, mysterious and unaccountable, took hold of his mind. Till then he knew nothing of Svayam Prabhā, or even the fact that he had been a *deva* in the second heaven in his previous life. But he felt riveted to the spot, his mind lingering over the panels, especially, over those which delineated the detail of the heavenly life of himself and Svayam Prabhā together.

Bajrajangha's interest and fascination for the picture grew from moment to moment. He

forgot himself, and stood like a statue, motionless and unmoving. All of a sudden a ray of light came into his eyes; recognition of the past shot through his recollection; he felt the warmth of intimacy grow in his soul! He immediately lost consciousness, fell senseless to the ground, and was at once caught in the arms of the watchful nurse!

In the meanwhile the Emperor had discovered the divine weapon termed *chakra* in his arsenal. He first of all went to worship the Saint who had obtained Omniscience as the reward of his *tapaścharaṇa* (austerities). Still greater luck awaited him there; for at the very sight of the Arhant his own mind became so much purified that he acquired the gift of clairvoyance on the spot.

He afterwards proceeded to examine the *chakra* that had come of its own accord, as the reward of great meritorious work in the previous lives. The *chakra* is a divine weapon which would seem to be attracted by the magnetism of certain really *great* kings. Its possessor is known as *chakravarti* (the owner or wielder of the *chakra*). There have been only twelve *chakravartis* (emperors) in Bhāratvarṣa, since the commencement of the present cycle, which began untold millions of ages ago!

Taking the *chakra* with him, the *chakravarti* started on the conquest of the world, leaving the new nurse with his daughter, as already described. He returned home on the very day when Bajrajangha was discovered as the re-incarnated form of Lalitānga by Śrimati's nurse, in the Mahāpūta Chaityālaya.

By the power of clairvoyance he, too, had come to know the real facts about the love between his daughter and his own sister's son in their previous lives. On getting home, he comforted her affectionately and told her that he had come to know all about the discovery of Lalitānga by her nurse, and assured her that she would be bringing the glad tidings in the course of the day to her beloved mistress.

Events shaped themselves as the *Chakravarti* had predicted. Śrimati was much rejoiced, and the general aspect of gloom was lifted from the minds of all who were devoted to her. In due course of time a marriage was proposed and performed of Śrimati and Bajrajangha, with great eclat in Pundarikini; and there were great celebrations. Another marriage was arranged between Amitateja and Anundhari at the time. For months and years the story of the great love of Śrimati and Bajrajangha was related in all households in the kingdom!

Lovers from the heavens and reunited lovers again now, Śrimati and Bajrajangha were devoted to each other, and spent much of their time together, enjoying the pleasures of life, and also worshipping the Lord Arhant, whom they regarded as the source of their great good luck. Many children were born to Śrimati; and they were all wise and healthy children.

It used to be the practice, nay the ambition, of all great men in those days to renounce the world and to practise *tapaścharaṇa* for controlling their destiny. In the fulness of time Bajrabāhu the royal father of Bajrajangha, too, placed the latter on the throne of his ancestors and became an ascetic saint under Śri Yamadhara Saint. Śri Gaṇadhar Saint initiated the Emperor later. The latter sought, before renouncing the world, to give his kingdom to his sons, Amitateja and others who were born subsequently; but they refused to be burdened with worldly filth that had to be given up ultimately. They all retired from the householder's life with their father. At last he placed his grandson Pundarika on the throne, and took to saintly life.

Pundarika was, however, too small yet. His grandmother, Lakshmimati and his mother Anundhari, who was the sister of Bajrajangha, sent urgent messengers to Bajrajangha to take

care of the child. Bajrajangha and Śrimati came to Pundarikini in compliance with the wishes of these ladies, and Bajrajangha arranged for the management of the affairs of the kingdom, and then went back to his own capital.

While Bajrajangha was going with his queen to Pundarikini, he had halted for the day in a wood on the way, and had the privilege of giving food to two Jaina Saints who happened to come that way. The Saints were enlightened with supernal knowledge and Bajrajangha and his queen were overjoyed at their good luck. Amongst the faithful adherents of Bajrajangha were his minister Mativara, the commander of his armies, Akampana, the family Pandit, Ananada, and a millionaire Dhana Mitra. These were much attached to their king, and were present at the feeding of the Saints. At the same time a remarkable thing was noticed by the company present. Four members of the animal kingdom, namely, a Monkey, a Pig, a Lion and a Mongoose, gathered there fearlessly and sat down, watching the feeding of saints, with apparent satisfaction, and without molesting any one!

After partaking of the food in the prescribed manner, the saints whose names were Damadhara and Sāgar Sen, gratified the assembly with religious discourse. Then Bajrajangha

who knew of their inner illumination, sat before them with folded hands and prayed them to narrate his own and Śrimati's previous lives. The Saints related the previous lives of Bajrajangha from that of Jaya Varmā, and then described those of Śrimati. She was in one of her past lives a Vaiśya girl, by name Nirnāmā, and lived in poverty and squalor. One day she met an illumined Saint, the Sage Pihitāsrava, and asked him the cause of her ill luck. She was told that it was the effect of her insulting an ascetic in one of her earlier lives, when she was known as Dhanasri. She had on one occasion thrown a dog's flesh before Śri Samādhigupta saint; but had immediately repented of it on being gently warned by the Saint, who also told her how to expiate her sin by special fasts. She observed the fasts properly, and became Nirnāmā; and afterwards was reborn as Svayam Prabhā, in the heavens, in consequence of her asceticism.

Bajrajangha put many questions to the Saints about the past lives of some of his friends and companions, and finally asked one of them to narrate the previous histories of the four animals that sat so quiet and fearless among men, and molested no one. The Saint said that the Lion was one Ugrasen, a Vaiśya by caste, in his previous incarnation, and was of an exceedingly

irascible disposition. He was easily excited and would then flare up vehemently. One day he forcibly possessed himself of certain provisions from the royal stores, and was caught and roughly handled. In consequence of the beating he then received he died and became a lion. The Monkey was one Nāgdatta in his previous life. He was a great rogue and given to swindling others by fraud. He even tried to help himself to the things that his mother had purchased for the marriage ceremony of his sister; but in this he failed. His low criminal character has dragged him into a monkey's form after death. The Pig was a raja's son, and was called Haribāhana. He had a very proud disposition, and showed much disrespect even to his parents. One day he was running away in defiance of the parental authority when he knocked against a stone pillar and was killed instantly. Pride has brought about his fall from the status of a man to that of a pig! The Mongoose was a miser, nicknamed Lolupa. He used to sell eatables in a small way. One day he induced certain labourers who were engaged in building a house for the king, by giving them bread and other eatables, to clandestinely remove some of the old big bricks that were lying in the *debris*. These the workmen brought to his place. It so happened that some of the

bricks were found to contain gold bars hidden inside them. The treasure probably belonged to the person who had built the original structure that was pulled down by the workmen. Lolupa kept the gold to himself, and made the workmen remove a few bricks every day to his place, without the knowledge of any one. For these he gave cheap food to the men. One day it so happened that he had to go to his daughter's village, and he left instructions with his son to ask the workmen for more bricks; but the latter did not do so. In the night when Lolupa got back he was furious to know that his son had not got any more bricks, and, blinded by rage and the lust of gold, struck and killed him. Then he struck a blow with a hatchet on his own legs, because had they not carried him to his daughter's village he would not have failed to secure more bricks. On his death he became a mongoose!

The Saint having narrated these lives, added that the sight of giving food to the Jaina Saint in the approved manner had brought to their recollection their past lives, and this was the reason why they were sitting fearlessly and without molesting any one. Their joy at the reverential offering of food would act exactly in the same way as if they had themselves been the givers, so that they would obtain

very prosperous and auspicious conditions in their next lives.

On getting back to Utpalakhetaka Bajrajangha and Śrimati began once more to enjoy the fruit of their previous good *karmas*. They were happy and did what they could to make others happy, in their turn.

Every thing that has a beginning in time has also an end sooner or later, except the state of *nirvana*, which has a beginning but no end. The long continuous life of pleasure of Bajrajangha and Śrimati, too, had an end.

It came quite unexpectedly. One night the servants in charge of the sleeping apartments forgot to open the ventilators, after lighting the incense in the braziers that used to diffuse fragrance throughout the night. The sleeping couple lay fast asleep, locked in each other's embrace. That night's sleep did not have an awakening for them any more on this earth!

5. The Bhogabhumija

Bajrajangha and Śrimati now appear in what is termed *bhogabhumi*. The term *bhogabhumi* is a compound of *bhoga* (enjoyment) and *bhumi* (land), and signifies the region where, like heavens, the residents have not to earn their bread by sweating in any sense. The regions

where men have to work for their livelihood are termed *karma bhumis* (lands of action). Only those who have performed highly meritorious deeds are born in *bhogabhumis*. The true *bhogabhumis* are, no doubt, heavens alone, where the conditions of life are the most pleasant, and which yield the utmost of satisfaction to the senses. The *bhogabhumis* come after the heavens, and are far superior to our earth, in respect of the pleasures that the people enjoy there.

The birth of the *bhogabhumija* is in the manner of the flesh in so far as a conception does take place there. It, however, differs from the ordinary manner of being born for humanity in so far as the full development of adolescence is attained only within a period of forty-nine days from the day of birth. But the parents are never destined to have the pleasure of beholding the faces of their progeny. They die the same instant that the children are born, the mother dying of a sneeze, and the father, of a yawn. The *bhogabhumijas* are born twins—a male and a female together. When they grow up they become husband and wife. They do not have to waste any part of their life in sleep; they do not perspire; and excrements are not formed in their bodies. Their eyes are always kept open, and they take food after three days. The quantity taken is never

more than the weight of a plum, though it may be less in some places. The female *bhogabhumija* conceives but once, and that only at the end of her life!

There are ten kinds of special tree-like things termed *kalpa vrikshas* from which the lucky residents of the *bhogabhumis* satisfy their wants. Foods, drinks, clothes (from their silky barks), plates and cups, ornaments (flowery decorations), flowers, perfumes, musical instruments (flutes and the like) are all supplied in abundance by these *vrikshas* (trees). There are trees also that radiate powerful phosphorescence all round, and the illumination is strong enough to outshine the light of the sun and the moon, if it does penetrate into the regions of the *bhogabhumis*. These trees also supply residences and pavilions for the use of the lucky residents. Probably their hollow trunks have to do duty for rooms. And if a certain number of them grow together so as to constitute a compound in the centre, the systematical lines of the hollow niches in their trunks would very naturally look like rows of rooms in a mansion.

There is no sense of property or appropriation known in the *bhogabhumis*. Nature is too lavishly abundant for that to be necessary. Crimes, too, are not committed by the *bhoga-*

bhumijas. All the three principal causes of crime—namely woman, land, and gold—are wanting there. The two last-named are to be had in such abundance that nobody cares to be burdened with the worry that is implied in putting oneself in proprietary relationship with them. And 'woman' is not an inducement to crime inasmuch as strong pre-natal attachment of the twins for each other is a guarantee against moral laxity of every kind. The *bhogabhumijas*, as a rule, are intelligent and virtuous. They know the arts of singing and dancing and are proficient in other accomplishments.

Bajrajangha and Śrimati were born twins in the *bhogabhumi* known as Uttarakuru. In seven weeks' time they grew up, became husband and wife, and began to enjoy the fruits of the merit acquired by the gift of food to the Jaina Saints. They enjoyed long life, and had no worries or anxieties of any kind to mar their joy.

One day they were visited by two great Saints the senior of whom revealed himself as the re-incarnated Svayambuddha, who was the minister of Bajrajangha in his incarnation of Mahābala. On the termination of the *sallekhanā* of Mahābala, Svayambuddha had taken to *sannyāsa* (asceticism), and was reborn in the first

heaven. From there he descended, in due course of time, and was born in the palace of a king of mortal men. He was called Pritamkara. The old fire of renunciation afterwards led him to seek refuge from the world in retirement. He entered the holy orders, and acquired clairvoyant powers by his severe *tapaścharaṇa*. Inner illumination brought back to his mind the knowledge of his former lives, and he determined to visit Mahābala's soul and aid him on to the Right Path, once again, seeking to establish him firmly in the Right Faith. He had also acquired the power to move in the sky, and this enabled him to cross the intervening oceans and continents. His companion was his younger brother. Having related all the above, the Saint proceeded to explain the principles of the true *Dharma* to the happy twins, who heard him with full attention and delight. They were much impressed by his discourse, and expressed their unbounded gratitude for his extreme goodness and regard. The Saint thereafter returned to his own country with his companion ascetic.

The *bhogabhumijas* are all reborn in the heavens on the termination of the life in the "land of joys." Śrimati's and Bajrajangha's souls, too, at last departed from the material *bhogabhumi* bodies and became embodied in the

ethereal vestments of the heavenly regions once more.

The four animals, the Lion, the Monkey, the Pig and the Mongoose, too, had been born in the *bhogabhumi*, because of their delight at the gift of food to the Saints by Bajrajangha, and re-incarnated in the second heaven on the termination of their lives in that land.

6. Sridhara Deva

Bajrajangha is now again in one of the higher heavens. He is this time called Śridhara.

Śrimati has now cast off the female form. She is re-born in the same heaven as Śridhara, not as a *devangnā*, but as a *deva*. This is due to Right Faith, for which Svayambuddha must be thanked!

The four companions of their earlier life, that is to say, Mativara, the minister, Akamapana, the generalissimo, Anauada, the master of ceremonies, and Dhana Mitra, the financier, are all now in one of the superheavens (called *graiveyikas*), because of their austerities which they had performed after the sudden death of Bajrajangha and Śrimati.

Once more the two loving souls find themselves in surroundings that are obtained only by the most fortunate among men, and that are to

be had by severe asceticism, by non-Jainas and by the Right Faith alone even when unaccompanied by austerities, by the Jainas. The lovers of the past three lives now become intimate friends, and find much joy in each other's company. Their lives are spent in the usual manner of *deva*-life. They worship the Lord *Arhant*, and spend their time enjoying the heavenly pleasures.

When Saint Pritamkara succeeded in destroying his *ghatiyā* (obstructive) *karmas* by his *tapaścharaṇa*, the *devas* came down to worship him, and among them came Śridhara. He learnt on enquiry from the Saint, who had now become omniscient, the pitiable fate of his remaining three ministers of a former life when he was Mahābala. Mahāmati and Sambhinnamati had sunk back into Nigoda which was involved in impenetrable darkness, and Śatimati had gone to the second hell. Śridhara felt much pity for them, though two of them were quite beyond his reach and help. He determined to help Śatamati. Accordingly one day he descended into the second hell and sought out Śatamati to whom he revealed their former identity. Their meeting was very pathetic. Śatamati was overwhelmed with sorrow, and eagerly listened to Śridhara's advice. He now readily believed the teaching of truth,

and adopted the Faith that is the saviour of souls. After further comforting him, Śridhara went back to his own celestial abode.

When Śatamati's term of life in the second hell came to an end he was born in the house of a king among men. From his childhood, he was very thoughtful, and not much given to pleasure-seeking. When he grew up, his father arranged for his marriage. Śridhara, coming to know of it by his *avadhijnāna* (clairvoyance), came down to the region of the mortal men, and advised him not to further entangle himself in worldly life. The youthful prince recollected his sorrowful experiences in the second hell, and refrained from marrying. Soon after this he renounced the world and became an ascetic saint. He performed severe *tapaścharaṇa*, and gave up the ghost in the approved manner, by the *sallekhanā* process. His soul then reincarnated in the fifth heaven, amidst ravishing scenes of brilliancy and splendour. Clairvoyance enabled him to ascertain the cause of his great good luck. He went and renewed his friendship with Śridhara, and thanked him for all he had done for him.

7. Subidhi

In the East Videha of Jambu Dvipa, in the province of Susimā, there reigned once upon a

time a great king who was named Sudṛiṣti. His queen was Sundarānandā Devi; who was as accomplished as she was beautiful. Śridhara's soul was born to Sundarānandā Devi, on the termination of his *deva*-life. His parents called him Subidhi. He was a very bright and handsome child, and soon acquired amazing proficiency in different arts and sciences.

When he grew up he was married to his maternal uncle's daughter whose name was Manoramā. To-day we do not, in India, countenance such marriages amongst close relations; but these were quite common in the past. The reason why marriages amongst near kinsmen were forbidden was rather political than religious. If a king had a dozen boys and an equal number of girls, and married them all in his own *gotra* (family), in the moment of need there would be only his kinsmen to fight his foes, which they would have done in any case. But if he married his children into families outside his own, then there would be no less than 12 + 12 + 1 = 25 armies of so many tribes or kings to stand by him on the battlefield! As marriage furnishes a real opportunity of making lasting friendships, the ancient law-giver laid down the above rule in the interest of society and *dharma*. To-day we have lost sight of its reason, and are blindly following

in the wake of sentiment and usage! It will be noticed that the avoidance of *gotra* aimed at the same result. The Agrawalas of to-day, however, really marry in their own *gotra*, though professing to avoid it. The explanation of the usage is to be found in the loss of their kingdom and the subsequent change of *varṇa* from the Kshatriya to the Vaiśya. They were too proud to give their daughters to non-ruling classes, and as reigning princes would not accept them, there was no alternative left except to marry them in the family, but by avoiding the line of one's own ancestor among Ugra Sen's sons!

Manoramā was a very entertaining girl, and soon obtained possession over her lord's heart. A son, Keśava, who was beautiful and brave was born to Subidhi from Manoramā. Keśava was really Śrimati's soul, who had re-incarnated in the second heaven after the life of a *bhogabhumija*. Past love again attracted him in the same family with his friend. Formerly the dearly beloved wife of Bajrajangha, she now became his son in his present incarnation!

Subidhi was much devoted to his son, and did not take to holy orders even in old age, owing to the love he bore for him. But he practised the Householder's *dharma* fully, and observed all the vows and the *pratimās* (stages of advancement on

the householder's path) regularly. At the end of his life he performed the *sallekhanā* with full severity of renunciation, and departed, absorbed in holy meditation and the contemplation of the Self!

The souls of the four animals had also descended from the second heaven, and were born as princes in the same country. They all led saintly lives, and in the end withdrew themselves from the world, to practise austerities.

8. The Achyutendra

On the termination of the earthly life, Subidhi's soul appeared in the sixteenth heaven, the name of which is Achyuta. He became the lord (Indra) in this heaven, and enjoyed the distinction of being the Achyutendra (Achyuta + Indra). The sixteenth is the highest heaven; beyond it there are some super-heavens where *ladies* are not met with. The glory of the Achyutendra is indescribable in words. He is invested with the most wonderful of the *ṛiddhis* (miraculous faculties and powers), and enjoys unparalleled splendour and pomp. Sex-matters are also much rarefied in this heaven, and gratification is not in the gross form, mere contact, at times only conversation, taking the place of the grosser forms.

Keśava (Śrimati's soul) also became Pratendra (Prati + Indra) in this very heaven on the termination of his life in Susimā. He had practised austerities after the death of Subidhi, and was rewarded by a birth in the sixteenth heaven. The dignity of a Pratendra which he attained was almost just as high as that of the Indra himself.

The four princes, too, who had been the Lion, the Pig, the Monkey and the Mongoose, respectively, in their earlier incarnations, arrived in this very heaven, as the result of austerities practised by them. All of them were great friends, and constituted, as it were, one family!

9. Emperor Bajranabhi

All greatness is the result of virtue actively practised by the soul, in some form. Most wonderful good luck results from the observance of the rules of piety and virtue when observed in the Right Way. Right Faith in itself is the greatest of boons, and those who acquire it attain to the highest positions in life, are secure against degradation in transmigration, and speedily get rid of the liability to repeated births and deaths, in the course of a few lives! The reason for all this is that the old kind of bonds are not forged by the soul after the acquisition of the true insight or Faith, and the practising of rigid self-denial

destroys the existing chains of thraldom in the course of a few re-incarnations. The re-incarnations, too, that are undergone after the acquisition of the Right Faith, are all very joyous and delightful, and steadily raise up the will-power to defy suffering and mishap, in spite of the pleasures they afford one in the heavens and on earth.

The Achyutendra became the son of King Bajra Sen and Queen Śrikāntā, on the termination of his life in the sixteenth heaven. He was named Bajranābhi. His body was resplendent, and shone like bright gold; he had many auspicious marks on his person, and was unusually intelligent and sagacious.

The Lion, the Pig, the Monkey and the Mongoose were similarly born to Rani Śrikāntā, as Vijaya, Vejayanta, Jayanta and Aprājita, respectively, and thus now became the brothers of Bajranābhi (the Bajrajangha of a former life)!

The souls of the four especial favourites of Bajrajangha, namely, of Mativara, the minister, Akampana, the generalissimo, Anandada, the master of ceremonies, and Dhana Mitra, the financier, also took birth as Bajranābhi's younger brothers, and were named, respectively, Subāhu, Mahābāhu, Peetha and Mahāpeetha.

The Pratendra from the sixteenth heaven, too, was born in the same land. He became Dhanadatta, the son of the great banker Kuberdatta. from his wife Anantamati. Bajranābhi later appointed him the lord chamberlain of his household. Thus did *karma* bring the old friends together once again!

Raja Bajra Sen retired. in the fullness of time. from the concerns of the world, and placed the crown on the head of Bajranābhi. Bajranābhi later became an emperor, when the *chakra* (discus) appeared in his arsenal. He then started for subduing the world. and returned successfully after many many years.

In the meanwhile his father had attained to Omniscience and the divine status of Tirthamkarahood, as the result of the fruition of highly meritorious *karmas*. Bajranābhi, who had been indifferent to the pleasures of life all along, and who had only married because of the desire of his royal father, now found himself more and more attracted away from the world. One day he placed his son, Bajradanta. on the throne, and along with his eight brothers, namely. the four favourites of his former life. Mativara, Akamapana, Ananda and Dhana Mitra, and the four re-incarnated animal souls. the Lion, the Pig, the Monkey and the Mongoose, adopted the life of austerity

as a Jaina Saint. Many kings and other great men followed his example, and entered the order along with him.

Tirthamkarapada (the status of a Tirthamkara) is the most difficult thing to obtain in the world. It is attained only by four and twenty souls in the course of half a cycle of time comprising innumerable millions of years. The causes that lead to Tirthamkarahood are, among others, a burning desire to remove the misery of the world, to carry enlightenment and joy to the hearts of all living beings, perfect faith, profound veneration for the true objects of veneration, namely, the Teacher, the Scripture of Truth and the Saint, Love, Service. and Study (investigation of Truth). These are collectively known as the *solāh-kāraṇa Bhāvanās* (the sixteen special impulses that lead to the glory of *Tirthamkarahood*). The seed of the Supreme Status is, generally, sown in the presence of a living Tirthamkara Himself. It is His example presumably that fires the mind and stirs up the imagination!

Bajranābhi, too, was fired with the inspiration of the Tirthamkara's example (who was his own Father). He longed to become a Tirthamkara himself, to save all who were involved in suffering and misery in the *samsāra* (transmigration). Henceforth to carry enlightenment and

joy to all became his noble mission in life. He had already succeeded in bringing his lower self under his control; but now he redoubled his efforts to attain to perfection in self-abnegation and in impassibility. His life, as a saint, was characterized by watchfulness, study and investigation of Truth, penances and fasts, service of saints, and by rigid self-denial, generally. He loosened his evil *karmas* considerably, and acquired the true scientific insight into the causes of embodiment and suffering, that is, Right Faith. Strictly speaking, Religion is not begun till all superstitions—including the one that is centred round the notion of a creator who made or makes the world and living beings—are not completely destroyed. The Faith Bajranābhi now possessed was without superstition, and steady like the edge of a sword, in respect of discriminating intelligence.

At the end of his life, Bajranābhi performed the auspicious *sallekhanā*, that is coveted by all seekers after emancipation from the clutches of calamity and death. He rose to the region of the super-heavens.

The eight brothers of Bajranābhi and the Seth's son, Dhana Mitra, also attained to the same super-heaven, as the result of the practising of severe soul-purifying austerities.

10. The Ahamindra

When the noble *sallekhanā* culminated in his soul's departure from the body of gross matter, Bajranābhi opened his eyes and found himself in the lovely surroundings of the most coveted Sarvārthasiddhi. The name literally means 'all desires gratified.' Those who are born in this region are literally without any further ambitions. They have practically reached the end of their journey, and have only one more earth life to go through. They know this fact, and are, consequently, filled with a serenity of mind that is not easily appreciated, except when actually realized. The burden of the soul is much lightened already in their case; the desiring nature has been almost wholly eradicated.

The Place of Nirvana, the Blessed Abode of the Perfect Men, who are above death, and disease and decay, in other words, of Immortal Gods, is only a few hundred *yojanas* (one yojana = 2,000 kosas, or 4,000 miles) above Sarvārthasiddhi. The land of this super-heaven itself is of a kind of material that gleams like precious stones. There are no ladies anywhere in the super-heavens; and Sarvārthasiddhi is likewise free from their presence. The *devas* who are born here are rid of sexual cravings, and they pass their time in the enjoy-

ment of peaceful serenity. They are very very long-lived, their term of life being measured, not in years, but, by way of analogy, in oceans of years. They all live for thirty-three O.Y.s (Oceans of Years); and premature death is unknown, and impossible for them.

The effect of their meritorious work in the earlier stages of the Life's Journey, towards the Goal, enables them to manifest a great deal of the hidden virtue of the spiritual nature in them; they enjoy the peaceful bliss, springing from within their Soul's being, although it is somewhat tinged with the material nature, that still remains to be eradicated. Sexual craving is like thirst when one is suffering from high fever, and is only felt by the man who is a slave to his senses. As he who has got no fever to make him thirsty does not regard iced water as gratifying, so will not he who is not afflicted with sense-craving ever regard sex-indulgence as adding to his joys. Thus he who has brought his animal nature fully under control, is rid of the craving, and will not miss the excitement any more. The Ahamindras have no regrets, no needs, nor longings for any kind of sense-produced pleasure. They do not even care to visit other places in the heavens or on earth, and are ever filled with the innate delight of the soul.

The Ahamindras take food once in thirty-three thousand years, and breathe after thirty-three fortnights. They pass no excrements, and are not liable to perspire. The amount of the food taken is much less than in the lower heavens. The size of an Ahamindra is only one cubit. But his body is resplendent, and symmetrical; and ugliness of feature and form is unknown. All the Ahamindras are gentle, dispassionate, and unusually wise.

The term *ahamindra* is a compound one, signifying "I am Indra." Each Ahamindra knows and realizes that he is an Indra (Lord) himself, and has no lords above him. They treat one another as absolute equals.

The relation between the need for food and breathing in the heavens seems to be a definite one. One O.Y. (Ocean of Years) of life requires feeding once every thousand years and breathing once a fortnight; and the proportion—one meal after 24,000 breaths—holds good throughout in all the different grades of the *deva*-life. The same proportion, it would appear, was intended by nature for the mortal man: we breathe twenty-four thousand times in 24 hours, and, therefore, should need only one meal a day. Perhaps we have 'evolved' out too rapidly to remain in touch with beneficent nature! The *sādhus* (saints) take

only one meal a day, and would seem to be endowed with more energy and capacity for work.

Bajranābhi spent his 33 O.Y.s (Oceans of Years) of life in Sarvārthasiddhi in the enjoyment of supreme tranquillity and joy. His friends of the previous lives were also there in the same super-heaven with him. They, too, had an allotment of 33 O.Y.s for their life, and enjoyed equal status. It is to be noted that, unlike lower heavens, jealousy has and can have no place in Sarvārthasiddhi!

CHAPTER II

CONDITIONS OF EARLY EXISTENCE

The present half-cycle of time is known as *Avasarpiṇi kālā*. It commenced 10 *korā-kori* (1 *korā-kori* = 10,000,000 × 10,000,000) O.Y.s less 39,500 years ago, roughly speaking. At its commencement the conditions of things on our little earth resembled those in a *bhogabhumi*.

There are six *aras* (spokes) in a half-cycle of time. The duration of the first *ara* of our half-cycle was 4 *korā-kori*, of the second, 3 *korā-kori*, of the third, 2 *korā-kori*, and of the fourth, 1 *korā-kori* O.Y.s less 42,000 years. The duration of the fifth (which is now running) will be 21,000 years, and of the sixth, the same as that of the fifth.

The *Avasarpiṇi* is the descending arc, because it is the arc of deterioration. All things have become deteriorated and will further deteriorate in this period. The other half-cycle will be the reverse of this. Longevity and stature as well as the conditions of existence have been affected alike. The *bhoga-bhumi* like felicity began to disappear long long ago, and was completely destroyed before the commencement of the fourth

ara of our half-cycle. People were then forced to sweat for their living, and the idea of private proprietorship gradually formed itself in their minds.

The foundation of the civilisation of law and order was not laid at once. Wise men arose from time to time, and kept on enlightening the people. The number of the sages who thus appeared is said to be fourteen, the last of whom was one of the greatest of Enlightened Men. He was called Nābhi Rai, and was married to a young lady who has been described as the very soul of female loveliness and virtue. Her name was Maru Devi, and she was destined to give birth to the World Saviour Sri Riṣabha Deva, the first Tirthamkara and the original Founder of Dharma (Religion) in this age.

Nābhi Rai was endowed with clairvoyance from birth, and effected much reform in the condition of the society which was then beginning to form. It may be stated that serious crimes were quite unknown in those days, and but little need of law had till then been felt by men.

The first *kulakara* was Pratiśruti. When the trees that shed strong light around them, in the state of the *bhogabhumi* disappeared and the sun and the moon became visible, the people, who saw them for the first time, were alarmed.

It was Pratiśruti who understood the cause of their appearance by his superior wisdom. He explained to them that the light of the trees had been too powerful thus far to enable the sun and the moon to be seen but now that that illumination had paled they became visible. The division of day and night dates from his time. It was the day of Purṇamāṣi in the month of Aṣādha, when the sun and the moon became visible in the sky, and it may be taken to be the first beginning of unrecorded history and of measurable time!

In the time of Pratiśruti some sort of kingship also came to be recognized and established: but it was still very inchoate. Offences were rare, the people being simple folk, who were strangers to trickery and deception. It was sufficient to deter them from a wrongful act to say "*hā.*" This was the only law that did duty for preventive measures, during the time of the first five *kulakaras* (wise men).

Sanmati was the second *kulakara*. In his time the light of the trees had faded into insignificance, and even the stars became visible in the sky. He was able to spot the constellations and may be said to be the first astronomer of the half-cycle.

Then came Kshemankara, after the lapse of a long long time. In his time animals began to

be troublesome. Hitherto the feeding-trees had supplied men and animals with enough food; but now the conditions were changing, and every one had to look for himself. The distinction of domestic and wild animals dates from Kshemankara's time.

Kshemandhara was the fourth *manu* who followed Kshemankara after a long interval of time. He devised weapons of wood and stone to drive away wild animals.

The next *manu* was *Seemankara*. Quarrels arose in his time over the *kalpa* trees, of which only a few were left now. He fixed the proprietary zones over them for different groups and communities of men. He was called Seemankara, because he had fixed the *seemās* (boundaries) of proprietorship.

Seemandhara was the next in order to appear. The quarrels had become more intense by his time over the disappearing *kalpa vṛikshas* (trees). He laid the foundation of individual ownership over the trees, and he also set marks on them.

Vimalabāhana was the seventh *manu*. He taught men how to utilise the services of domestic animals, and invented the tethering rope, the bridle and the like to keep them under control.

Chakshuṣmana then appeared after the lapse of another long period of time. In his time the

old order of *bhogabhumi* was so far changed that the parents did not die at the birth of their progeny. Some people were astonished at this and enquired the cause of the change from Chakshuṣmana, which he explained.

Yaśasvāna, the ninth *kulakara*, was then born after the lapse of another long period. He taught men how to regard their children as their own. and to bless them.

The tenth *manu* was Abhi Chandra, in whose time the old order of things underwent still further changes. The people now lived to play with their children; they also began to give them useful instruction. Because Abhi Chandra was the first to play with his children in moonlight he came to be known as Abhi Chandra (*chandra* signifying the moon).

The eleventh *manu* was Chandrābha, in whose time children came to be looked after better. His guidance was also very beneficial for mankind in certain other ways.

The twelfth *manu* was Marud Deva. In his time state-control was established over all the *kalpa* trees that had still remained in the land. Marud Deva also taught men the art of navigation and built different kinds of skiffs and boats. Men now took to scaling high walls and hills. Many small hills, rivulets and lakes were formed

in his time, and there was some scanty and irregular rainfall for the first time.

Prasenājit was the last but one of the *kulakaras*. In his time children came to be born with the *prasenā* (the amnion or membrane in which a child is born), whence his name, Prasenājit. Before his time children were not born wrapped in a membrane.

The last of the *kulakaras* was Nābhi Rai, as already stated. He was the wisest man of his age. He earned his epithet (Nābhi Rai) from the fact that he taught men how to cut the navel chord termed *nābhi* (the navel), which had now got to be cut. Thick rain clouds now began to gather in the sky freely. It would appear that perhaps up to the time of Marud Deva the existence of the *kalpa* trees (or may be some other natural force, inimical to cloud-formation) had prevented rain clouds in the sky; but in his time rain sometimes fell, and by the time of the fourteenth *manu* both rain and clouds became a regular feature of the natural aspect of things.

Spontaneous cultivation also appeared in the time of the fourteenth *manu*, as well as fruit trees.

As regards penal laws there was no need for elaborate measures thus far. As already stated, the first five *kulakaras* found it enough to rebuke

the wrong-doer with "*hā*"! The next five had need of "*mā*" to reinforce the effect of disapproval. 'Mā' signified regret, as if to say: "I regret that you should have done such a thing as this!" This was enough to keep the culprit straight for the future. The remaining *kulakaras* added "*dhika*" to the existing code of penalties, to express their abhorrence of the evil deed. But regular laws had to be laid down in the day of Bharata of whom we shall have to speak later on.

CHAPTER III

FOUR AND TWENTY TIRTHAMKARAS

वामनोऽपि ततश्चक्रे तत्र तीर्थावगाहनम् ।
यादृग्रूपः शिवो दृष्टः सूर्यबिम्बे दिगम्बरः ॥
पद्मासनस्थितः सौम्यस्तथा तं तत्र संस्मरन् ।
प्रतिष्ठाप्य महामूर्तिं पूजयामास वासरम् ॥
मनोऽभीष्टार्थसिद्ध्यर्थं ततः सिद्धिमवाप्तवान् ।
नेमिनाथ शिवेत्येवं नाम चक्रे स वामनः ॥

[Vamana regarded the place as a Tirtha. The (true) form of Siva, even that digambara (undraped) form was seen in the Image in the Sun! Recalling the form of the Lord, seated in the padmāsana (the sitting yoga posture with legs crossed) which is the embodiment of tranquillity itself, he established the Image of Bāsara, and worshipped it! This he did to attain to the fulfilment of the wish of his heart: this wish was fulfilled! That Vamana named Nemi Nath Siva!] —The Skande Purana (Hindu): Prabhāsa Part, xvi. 94—96.

There is a special fascination in the number four and twenty; the Hindus have twenty-four *avatāras* (incarnations) of their favourite god, Viṣṇu; there were twenty-four counsellor gods of

the ancient Babylonians; the Buddhists posit four-and twenty previous Buddhas, that is, teaching gods. The Zoroastrians also have twenty-four Ahuras who are regarded as "the mightiest to advance desire and Dominion of blessings!" These Great Ones are thus addressed in one of the sacred books of the Parsis :—

> "Your blessings shall ye give us, all ye that are one in will, with whom right good thought, Piety and Mazda (are one), according to promise giving your aid when worshipped with reverence" (Yasna, li. 20).

But the more remarkable case of identity of thought between Jainism and a non-Jaina creed is furnished by Jewish Apocrypha which acknowledges exactly four and twenty "faces" on the Ladder of Jacob. The explanation given is as follows :—

> "The ladder which thou sawest which had twelve steps having two human faces which changed their appearance—now this ladder is this age, and the twelve steps are the times of this age, and the twenty-four faces are the kings of the lawless heathen of this age. Under these kings will be tried (thy children's children and the line of) thy sons . . . ." (The Lost Apocrypha of the Old Testament, pages 96, 98 and 99.)

Of course, the language would not have been apocryphal had it been a little more lucid! But the true interpretation of the passage is not

difficult. The term heathen refers to the non-Israelites; and the lawless are those who have risen above the dead letter of the law, that is to say, who conform to the spirit of the teaching and who have rid themselves of the petrifying outer encrustation, namely, the mere rules and regulations of the scriptures. Hence, those who have realized the Self, *i.e.*, the divinity of their Soul, are the lawless, and their four and twenty kings are the four and twenty TIRTHAMKARAS under whom shall be judged, that is to say, by whose standard, shall be judged all those who seek to attain salvation. In other words, the four and twenty Tirthamkaras are models of Perfection for men, who must raise themselves to Their standard to be 'saved.'

Such is the testimony furnished by the Jewish Esotericism, which is the only true side of their religion. Its true merit has been lost sight of owing to the allegorical vogue, which has estranged us from one another and from the Truth. When the true interpretation of the world's apocrypha is reached, the differences will simply melt away, leaving men gaping at each other, in sheer astonishment and wonder! Let the reader read 'The Key of Knowledge,' the 'Confluence of Opposites' and the 'Glimpses of A Hidden Science in Original Christian

Teachings,' to realize this great truth for himself.

But the most remarkable case of this doctrinal identity is furnished by the Christian Apocalypse, where the scene and the surroundings are purely Jainist. An initiation scene is laid in allegorical style. In the centre of a huge hall is placed a throne on which is placed Life (*Jiva*) that is Divine; round about the Throne are four and twenty seats on which sit four and twenty Elders, robed in white and wearing crowns of gold. In this Assembly is introduced the Lamb (the symbol of the soul characterized with supreme humility) that is to be initiated. In front of the Throne are four remarkable beasts: one of them is like a lion, another resembles an eagle, the third has the appearance of a calf, and the fourth has the face of a man. These beasts have six wings each, and are full of eyes all over; and they rest not night and day, but keep on blessing the One on the Throne.

Such is the scenic imagery of the hall of initiation. A detailed elucidation of it is to be found in the tenth chapter of 'The Key of Knowledge' and the seventh and the ninth lectures of the 'Confluence of Opposites'; but a brief explanation may be attempted here. The beasts represent the different kinds of souls that are em-

bodied in the four elements (of matter), namely, the earth-bodied (represented by the lion, since he walks on the earth), the air-bodied (represented by the eagle who flies in the air), the water-bodied (represented by the calf, which is the young of the sea-mammals), and the fire-bodied (represented by the sun which is painted as the face of a man). Wings are a symbol for time, since it flies; and the number six is descriptive of the six *aras* of a half-cycle in which four and twenty Tirthamkaras appear and preach the Truth. Plainly put, the significance of the secret teaching is only this that Life is Divine, and its divinity is manifested most perfectly and fully in the case of four and twenty Tirthamkaras, who appear in a half-cycle of time, consisting of six *aras*, and preach the Noble Truth to and for the benefit of the souls embodied in material bodies! Why these higher truths were couched in the mystery language that is generally unintelligible to men, will be found explained in the books named above, and cannot be repeated here.

The *Tirthamkaras*, then, are only four and twenty in each half-cycle of time. But the number of *Siddhas* is very great. The Siddhas are exactly like the Tirthamkaras in all respects in so far as innate virtues and attainments are concerned. They are all omniscient, and endowed

with exactly the same attributes as the Tirthamkaras. But They differ from the latter in this that teaching is not Their mission in life in the same way as it is that of the Tirthamkaras, and therefore They are not surrounded by the Pomp with which *devas* and men surround the latter.

The *Siddhas* are also referred to both in the Jewish and the Christian Apocrypha. In the former it is said :—

"And I Esdras saw upon the mount Sion a great multitude whom I could not number, and they all praised the lord with songs. And in the midst of them there was a young man of high stature, taller than all the rest and upon every one of their heads he set crowns, and was more exalted; whereat I marvelled greatly. So I asked the angel, and said, What are these, my lord? He answered and said unto me, These be they that have put off mortal clothing, and put on the immortal, and have confessed the name of God: now are they crowned, and receive palms. Then said I unto the angel, What young man is he that setteth crowns upon them, and giveth them palms in their hands? So he answered and said unto me, It is the son of God, whom they have confessed in the world." —II Esdras, Chap. II.

Briefly the explanation of the above half-plain half-mystic account is this: by following the Ideal (in Jewish and Christian terminology, the Son of God) souls are crowned into Divinity, and the number of Those that have freed and

shall thus free themselves from subjection to the inimical forces is countless. These are the *Siddhas* of Jainism!

The Christian description of the Siddhas is given in the seventh chapter of the Book of Revelation in the 9th and 13th to 17th verses, and runs as follows:—

9. "After this I beheld, and lo a great multitude which no man could number . . . . *stood before the throne,* . . . . clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.

13. "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, what are these that are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14. "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17. "For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

This is undoubtedly the true description of the status of *Siddhahood*, in mystic script. For

a detailed elucidation of the passage reference must, again, be made to the books already mentioned; for this is no place for the elaboration of allegorical exegesis. But it will interest us to know what Clement of Alexandria, who, according to Methodius, was an immediate disciple of St. Peter himself, says as to the four and twenty Elders of the Christian Apocalypse. He writes (see the Ante Nicene Christian Library, Vol. XII. pp. 365-366):—

"He then who has first moderated his passion and trained himself for impassibility, and developed to the beneficence of gnostic perfection, is here equal to the angels. Luminous already, and like the sun shining in the exercise of beneficence, he speeds by righteous knowledge through the love of God to the sacred abode, like as the apostles . . . . And although here upon earth he be not honoured with the chief seat, he will sit down on the four and twenty thrones, judging the people, as John says in the Apocalypse."

These thrones, then, are intended for the greatest Teachers among men, by whose standard, or norm, men shall have to judge themselves if they want to attain to divine Perfection. These are the Tirthamkaras whose number is identically the same as that of the thrones and of the Elders who are seated on them!

Concerning the excellence of the condition of the *Siddhas* (in Christian terminology, the Saved

Ones) the Early Christian teaching mentioned the same characteristics of Their Existence in Nirvana as are given in the Jaina Scriptures:—

"There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."—Revelation xxi. 4.

". . . . in which there is neither sleep, nor pain, nor corruption, nor care, nor night, nor day measured by time . . . . eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him."—A.N.C. Lib., Vol. ix. part ii, p. 50.

"For the incorruptible nature is not subject to generation; it grows not, sleeps not, hungers not, is not wearied, suffereth not, dies not, is not pierced by nails and spears, sweats not, drops not with blood. Of such kind are the natures of angels and of souls released from the body. For . . . . these are of another kind, and different from these creatures of our world, which are visible and perishing."—*Ibid.*, p. 88.

About the permanence of the condition of Liberation it is said:—

". . . . and they shall reign for ever and ever."—Revelation xxii. 5.

The correspondence is marvellous in each detail! We may, then, take it that the number of the Perfect Ones, the *Siddhas*, is very large. while the Tirthamkaras are only four and twenty.

But what are we to say to those wiseacres who think that Jainism only came into existence in the time of Mahavira or at the earliest in that of Parśva Nath, and the earlier two and twenty Tirthamkaras are the outcome of the Jaina imagination? Some of these intellectual giants had at one time relegated the Jaina Creed to the position of an offshoot of Buddhism, that was deemed to have arisen in the sixth century of the Christian era! But to-day the historicity of Parśva Nath is beyond dispute. What is really remarkable about the Jaina account is the confirmation of the number four and twenty itself from non-Jaina sources. The Hindus, indeed, never disputed the fact that Jainism was founded by Riṣabha Deva in this half-cycle, and placed His time almost at what they conceived to be the commencement of the world! They recognised His Divinity fully, acknowledged that He was Omniscient, and counted Him amongst their *avatāras*. They give the same parentage of Riṣabha Deva as the Jainas do; they even agree that His son was the Emperor Bharata who lent his name to India, that is to say, after whom India came to be known as Bhāratvarṣa. If this is not history and historical confirmation I do not know what else would be covered by these terms. There is even an old inscription in the

Khandagiri Hill in which there is a mention of a consecrated Statue of the first Tirthamkara, Riṣabha Deva, that had been carried off by King Nanda Vardhana about 2400 years ago, and that was brought back to Kalinga (Orissa), by Kharvale, in the 2nd century B.C., from Pataliputra (modern Patna). This Statue most probably dated back prior to Mahavira's time, and possibly even to that of Parśva Nath.

As for the other *Tirthamkaras*, Ariṣta Nemi is a name which is quite familiar in the Hindu literature including the Vedas, and he would appear to be identical with the twenty-second Tirthamkara who bore that name, but was generally known as Nemi Nath. Modern opinion is now veering round to regard Nemi Nath as a real historical person (see "Lord Arishtanemi" by H. Bhattacharya, pp. 88-89). In the Rig and the Yajur Vedas, too, there is a mention of the Lord (see the Jaina Patha Pradarśhak, iii. 94—107): but no historical details are given to fix the identity, which is, however, established by other references. The Hindu scripture, the Prabhāsa (Skande) Puraṇa distinctly acknowledges Nemi Nath, as is evident from the quotation at the top of this chapter. A reference to the seventh Tirthamkara, Sri Suparśva Nath, is to be found in the Buddhist literature

which shows the existence of a temple of "Sappu" in Rajagrihi in Buddha's time (Lord Arishtanemi, p. 86). In the Rig Veda itself mention has been made of the first Tirthamkara, Riṣabha Deva, by name (Rig Veḍa, X.12. 168), though the Hindus now interpret the text in a way to obliterate the reference. Hindu scholars are, however, not wanting who have sincerely felt the identity to be undeniable (Historical Gleanings, p. 76; the Jaina Pathapradarśak, Vol. III, Part 3, p. 106). It is interesting to note that Jaina writers have quoted many other passages from the Vedas themselves which are no longer to be found in the current editions. Weeding has very likely been carried out on a large scale. This may be accounted for by the bitter hostility of the Hindus towards Jainism in recent historical times.

Further references to Jainism are to be found in the Hindu books under various names. The term "*arhan*" repeatedly occurs in the oldest of the Vedas. There is also the text मुनयः वातवसनाः which is descriptive of Jaina Saints (Rig Veda X. 136-2 and Indian Antiquary, Vol. XXX. p. 280), as Dr. Webber admits. Jaina saints were also termed *śramanas*; and there is a mention, in the Rig Veda, of *śramanas* who interfered in the Hindu sacrifices ("Bhagwan Parśva Nath,"

p. 21). The sect of Vratyas mentioned in the Atharva Veda can, again, be the Jainas and none else. The term means the observer of vows, as distinguished from the performer of sacrifices which applied to the Hindus at the time, and has been commented upon by a learned scholar, Prof. A. Chakravarti, in the Jaina Gazette (Vol. XXI Part 6), and by Babu Kamta Prasad Jain in " Bhagwan Parśva Nath " (see the Introduction). The Vratyas* were of two kinds, the saints and the householders. In the fifteenth part of the Atharva Veda there is a mention of a Maha (great) Vratya who must be one of the *Tirthamkaras*, and presumably Riṣabha Deva, the first. He is said to have stood in one (*yoga*) posture for a whole year, after which at the request of certain *devas*, he occupied a seat furnished by them. The *devas* are also said to

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* Mr. K. P. Jayaswal gives the following account of the Vratyas in the Modern Review for 1929 (see p. 499): " The Lichchhavis ruled opposite Pataliputra in the district of Muzaffarpur. They are called Vratyas or un-Brahmanical Kshatriyas; they had a republican from of government; they had their own shrines, their non-Vedic worship, their own religious leaders; they patronized Jainism . . . Mahavira was born among them. Manu condemns them as degenerates. Chandragupta's son, Samudragupta, who acquired the Imperial position for himself and his family by establishing an all-India Empire, proudly describes himself as the *douhitra* (daughter's son) of the Lichchhavis."

have attended upon him in his 'rambles.' As we shall see later on all this tallies with the life of the first *Tirthamkara* in a very remarkable manner. Not the least significant is the reference in the Yoga Vaśiṣṭha (xv. 8) to Jainism, where Rama himself says :

नाहं रामो न मे वाञ्छा भावेषु न च मे मनः ।
शान्त मासितुमिच्छामि स्वात्मनीव जिनो यथा ॥८॥

[Tr. Rama said : I am not Rama (object of meditation for yogis), nor (am I free from) desires ; I wish to attain, in mine own self, the tranquillity of the *Jina* (Conqueror, *i. e.*, Tirthamkara) !]

This shows that Jainism was flourishing at the time of Rama which is very very ancient according to Hindu reckoning.

The confirmation from outside Jainism of its sacred tradition is not to be wondered at. It is precisely what is to be expected if its teaching is really concerned with Truth, and the emancipation of souls. The explanation of the differences of the other religions with Jainism as well as with one another among themselves, is to be found in their resort to allegorical style, as has been explained in my works on comparative religion. The truth is that different on their outward surface, they are nevertheless at one with one

another at the core, and present the same doctrine and teaching with Jainism.

These World-Teachers, the Jinas, or Tirthamkaras, it is to be noticed, are not worship-seeking, psalm-loving, prayer-granting, wish-fulfilling deities. Their religion forbids all these things. They will tell you to go away elsewhere if you want boons from Them! They only have Their teaching to give, which at once demands the renunciation of all the 'good' things of the world, and will not, in any sense, encourage one's crying for them. Those who come to worship Them have to take leave of the world one day! There is no reason, then, why the Jainas should falsely insist on positing all the four and twenty Jinas! One World-Teacher would be quite enough for the Teaching. His example and footprints will be enough for men's needs! If the question was of granting boons or the prayers of the devotees, the larger the number of gods, the better it would be for mankind. But that is not the case here. As for the lustre of antiquity, the thirst for which is said to have moved the Jainas to invent the first twenty-two of the Tirthamkaras, the historicity of the first Holy Lord being established from the unassailable testimony of the Scriptures of Hinduism which comes from a rival faith, there could

have been no occasion for Jainas to be worried over the matter. Important evidence, recently unearthed by the Archaeological Department of India, abundantly shows the prevalence of Jainism long long before the age which the modern investigators have assigned to the oldest of the Vedas. A number of Statuettes have been recovered at Mohenjo-daro which are characterised by half-shut eyes, the gaze being fixed on the tip of the nose. " These statuettes clearly indicate that . . . . the people of the Indus Valley in the Chaloolithic period not only practised yoga but worshipped the images of the yogis." The Memoir of the Archaeological Survey of India).* This takes us several thousands of years beyond the date of the Statue of the first Tirthamkara. which was carried off by Nanda Vardhana in the fifth century B.C. These human Statuettes must be Jaina relics, as they are outside the Vedic Pantheon and Cult. But all this merely confirms what an astute and recondite scholar, Major J.G.R. Forlong, said years ago (see " Short Studies in the Science of Comparative Religion," pages 243-244) :—

" All Upper, Western, North Central India was

* See the " Survival of the Pre-historic Civilization of the Indus Valley," and the Pioneer, dated November 10th, 1929.

then—say 1500 to 800 B.C. and, indeed, from unknown times—ruled by Turanians, conveniently called Dravids, and given to tree, serpent and phalik worship . . . . but there also then existed throughout upper India an ancient and highly organized religion, philosophikal, ethikal and severely ascetikal, *viz.*, Jainism out of which clearly developed the early ascetikal features of Brahmanism and Buddhism. Long before Aryans reached the Ganges or even the Sarasvati, Jainas had been taught by some twenty-two prominent Bodhas, saints or Tirthamkaras, prior to the historical twenty-third Bodha Parsva of the eighth or ninth century B.C., and he knew of all his predecessors—pious Rishis living at long intervals of time; and of several scriptures even then known as Purvas or Puranas, that is, 'ancient,' which had been handed down for ages in the memory of recognized anchorites, Vanaprasthas or 'forest recluses.' This was more especially a Jaina Order, severely enforced by all their 'Bodhas' and particularly in the sixth century B.C. by the twenty-fourth and last, Mahavira of 598-526 B.C. This ascetik Order continued in Brahmanism and Buddhism throughout distant Baktria and Dacia. . . ."

It would thus seem that the moderns have to revise their methods of reasoning and research if they wish their inferences to accord with solid facts.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST WORLD TEACHER

ऋषभं मासमानानां सपत्नानां विषा सहिं ।
हन्तारं शत्रूणां कृधि विराजं गोपितं गवाम् ॥

(Rig Veda X. 12. 166).

[Tr. O Rudra-like Divinity! do thou produce amongst us, of high descent, a Great God, like Riṣabha Deva, by becoming *Arhan*, which is the epithet of the first World Teacher; let Him become the destroyer of the enemies!]—The Jaina Patha Pradarśaka, III. 3. 106.*

The reason why the Tirthamkaras are only four and twenty while the Perfect Ones (the *Siddhas*), who are like Them in all other respects, are innumerable, consists of two factors, one internal and the other external. —the aspiration to carry happiness and joy and enlightenment to all living beings on the part of the aspiring Soul, and the emulation of *devas* and men to glorify the WORLD TEACHER.

When six months of the long life of the

* The above is the English rendering of the reading by a learned Hindu Scholar, Prof. Virupaksha Beriyar, Veda Tirth, M.A.



STATUE OF RIṢABHA DEVA IN ONE OF THE TEMPLES AT ARRAH

Ahamindra remained to him in the super-heaven Sarvārthasiddhi, the Indra (ruler) of the first heaven, who always takes the lead in such matters, gave orders to his subordinate *devas* to get ready for the glorification of the coming WORLD TEACHER. Kubera, the lord of the celestial treasury then began to rain down choice gems in the Palace of the fourteenth Manu, Nābhi Raja, to announce the coming of the Master !

Ajudhya, in the country of Kauśala (modern Oudh), was the capital of Nābhi Raja's kingdom, and it had been built, with the advice of the heavenly *devas*, to represent the capital of the heavenly Kingdom of Indra in the first heaven. For six months Kubera celebrated the coming of the Lord in advance, in the way stated. All Ajudhya loaded themselves with wealth in this period. Even the walls of many mansions and palaces were now studded with lustrous gems. Everywhere there were signs of affluence and wealth, while poverty and squalor had flown away, nobody knew where !

In the Sarvārthasiddhi, Bajranābhi's great Soul perceived his garland losing lustre, and other unmistakable signs of the coming transformation ; but this time he was quite unmoved by them. He knew that that would be his last

incarnation, and that he would become a WORLD TEACHER, the Riṣabha Deva *avatara*, as the Hindus call him! His great soul was, if anything, now all the more eager to enter on his divine mission. He devoted the rest of his days, as an *ahamindra*, in the holy *dharma-dhyāna* (religious meditation), and the worship of the God of gods, the *Arhant*, in the Temples appertaining to his region. At last at the end of the six months, the ethereal *deva* body was 'dispersed' in all directions, as rapidly as it was formed; the *Ahamindra* was dead! At that same moment the lovely queen of Śri Nābhi Raja dreamt sixteen wonderful dreams. She saw first of all a white celestial elephant, making deep sounds. She next saw a great white bull of beautiful form. Her third dream consisted in her seeing a white lion with red shoulders. The Goddess Lakshmi was seen next, with two large elephants who were performing her *abhiṣeka* (bathing) with golden pitchers. Maru Devi next saw two garlands of fragrant flowers, with black bees hovering over them, intoxicated with their fragrance. In the sixth dream she saw the Full Moon surrounded by her satellite stars. The seventh dream consisted in the sight of the Rising Sun in the East, destroying the darkness, and rising gloriously in the sky. In the eighth dream she saw two golden

vases with a large golden lotus each, on the top. In her ninth dream she saw fishes sporting in a lovely tank, bedecked with different kinds of lotuses. She next saw an effulgent Lake filled with a pale yellow fluid which shone like liquid gold. In the eleventh dream she saw a great Ocean agitated with waves which broke, with gentle sounds, into small spray. She next saw a very big Throne that was set with bright stones. Her thirteenth dream was the sight of a heavenly Palace ; the fourteenth, of the Residence of the Nagendra who is the Lord of the *devas* of the Naga Kumara clan; the fifteenth, a heap of glittering Jewels, and the last a Blazing Fire that burned smokeless and bright ! After these she saw one more dream which was the sight of a large beautiful bull, resplendent like gold, entering her open mouth !

It was the morning time when the virtuous Queen of Nābhi Raja saw the above dreams. Soon she woke up, full of joy. She understood her dreams to be the herald of a great joy that was to come into her life. Who was there in all her great kingdom who might be ignorant of the great Event that was going to take place? She performed her toilet as usual, and with a light step and a wildly-beating heart proceeded towards the king's apartments. She found him

seated in the great Assembly Hall. The king received her with affectionate esteem, and she sat down, by his side, on the Throne. She then related her wonderful dreams that augured such good luck. Nābhi Raja was endowed, like all truly pious and advanced Souls, with clairvoyance, and she desired to hear the interpretation of her dreams from his lips. The ministers and others who were present at the time were filled with wonderment and extreme joy.

"Thy first dream, O goddess!" exclaimed Nābhi Raja, "presages the birth of an Excellent Son, the second, that of His Seniority over all others. That He will be strong as a lion, is implied in the third dream. The garlands indicate that thine Son will be the Founder of the True Faith. The significancy of the goddess Lakshmi whose *abhiṣeka* was being performed by the two elephants is that *devas* will come to perform the *abhiṣeka* of thy Son. The full Moon foretells the fact that the Boy will be the giver of Joy to the world. That He will be bright like the Sun is to be understood from the next dream. The pair of fishes is indicative of the bliss that thy Son will enjoy, and the fact that He will be further endowed with all the innumerable excellent virtues, is clear from the dream of the big Lake which thou sawest. The Ocean predicts that He will be the

WORLD TEACHER, and the Lord of Divine Sovereignty. That he is coming from the heavens to be born to thee is the import of the heavenly Palace which thou sawest, and the sight of the Palace of the Nagendra shows that He will be endowed with Clairvoyance from birth. The heap of glittering Jewels signifies that He will be possessed of all Divine attributes, while the smokeless conflagration that thou sawest indicates that He will burn up all the host of *karmas* that hold the soul in bondage and subject one to transmigration. The additional dream that was seen by thee indicates that Śri Riṣabha Devaji has been conceived in thine womb!"

Thus did Nābhi Raja who was near to bursting with extreme joy, explain the mystery of the heavenly dreams to his beloved queen. Their companions who heard all this were much astonished. All were overwhelmed with gladness and delight.

The announcement of the good tidings was received with acclamation throughout the length and breadth of the royal capital. Men and women gathered round street corners to express their great joy, to congratulate one another, to bless the great Queen!

All of a sudden strains of heavenly music struck the ears of the delighted residents of Nābhi

Raja's capital; a great rising hum of voices was heard ; the sky itself became darkened with myriads of ethereal forms! It was the *deva* hosts that were coming to celebrate the Great Event. They had come to know of the Descent into Queen Maru Devi's Womb of the Coming WORLD TEACHER, and had turned out, in haste, to do reverence to the Mother of God !

There were great celebrations in Ajudhya that day. The splendour was such as the residents had never even dreamt of. On the Royal Throne of Gems in the great Hall of Audience were installed the Parents of the Lord, and were worshipped, in all becoming ways, with full devotion. The mortal world had long hankered after Immortality, and their enthusiasm was unbounded at the prospect of the speedy arrival of Him who was going to show them the way to Immortality! What wonder then that *devas* came down to join men in the celebration of the Great Event? They, too, are mortals, and feel the approach of death even more poignantly than ourselves, because of their having so much more to lose.

Today we wonder why the *devas* do not come down to see us on the earth. But whom should they come down to see here today? Who is superior to them in knowledge or power or greatness on the earth? Should they come down to smell

the stench of the slaughter houses, the meat-shops, stinking kitchens and reeking restaurants? Will you have them come down to ignorant priests, bloated self-complacent tyrants, lying statesmen, dishonest traders, or kings and emperors who respect neither their word nor their signatures? *Devas* have extremely delicate senses, and the stench from the world's latrines and cess-pools must be quite nauseating to them. No one is expected to deliberately walk into an atmosphere reeking with filth and effluvium, unless for some good and adequate cause. The *devas* do come when there is an adequate cause, *e.g.*, to do reverence to a WORLD TEACHER; but will not enter the atmosphere of corruption and filth otherwise!

Do the *devas* exist? Of course, they do. If they did not, the world's scriptures will not be filled with accounts of *deva* life! The Jainas, too, cannot all be deemed to have been hoodwinked throughout ages as to their existence. But have they not invented the story to impress others? But who could be impressed with such a fiction if totally false? They seek, in the first instance, only their own salvation, which they know will not be attained till they confess a lie like this and perform adequate penance! Let us honestly recognize that there are many wonder-

ful things in the world, of most of which we are still ignorant. The blind ant may perhaps imagine that the range of life can embrace nothing more than a few species of insects and moths, and a few kinds of larger animals, including perhaps man ! But can we say that there can be no life on any other planet than the earth, or that there can be no differences of bodies, functions and faculties in other regions of space? The testimony of the ancients, under the circumstances, is quite enough to settle the point, especially when we find it strongly confirmed by the fact that the limit placed on the number of the Tirthamkaras is quite unexplainable otherwise than on the supposition that *devas* took part in celebrating their *kalyānakas* (principal events of life), and built an Assembly Hall for Them to preach the Noble Truth.

CHAPTER V

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

नाभेर्निसर्गं वक्ष्यामि हिमाङ्केऽस्मिन्निबोधत ।
नाभिस्त्वजनयत्पुत्रं मरुदेव्यां महाद्युतिं ॥५९॥
ऋषभपार्थिवश्रेष्ठसर्वक्षत्रस्य पूर्वजम् ।
ऋषभाद्भरतो जज्ञे वीरः पुत्रशताग्रजः ॥६०॥
सोऽभिषिच्यर्षभः पुत्रं महाप्राव्राज्यमास्थितः ।
हिमाह्वं दक्षिणं वर्षं भरताय न्यवेदयत् ॥६१॥

[Tr. I shall relate the family of Nābhi: know that he flourished in the country called Hima; he begot, on Maru Devi, Riṣabha Deva of bright radiance, who was the best of Kings and the Ancestor of the Kshatriya clan. To Riṣabha was born, Bharata, the eldest of a hundred sons, and a great Hero. Prompted by the spirit of world-flight, Riṣabha Deva gave Hima, which is in the south, to his son Bharata.]—The Brahmānda Puraṇa (Hindu), XIV. 59—61.

It was in the last part of the night of the dark half of the second of the month of *Aṣādha* that the World Teacher was conceived by the illustrious Queen of the Kulakara Nābhi Rai. The moon was at the time in the constellation known as the *Uttarāṣādha*. In the morning the celebrations were held, as we have already seen.

Many celestial maidens came to attend on the Mother of God, of their own accord, at the instance of the Lord of the first Heaven. They assisted Maru Devi in all ways, and kept her cheerful and bright.

There is always something different in a World Teacher to distinguish Him from the rest of humanity. Riṣabha Deva's embryonic growth was also marked by many wonderful signs. There were no signs of pregnancy apparent in the body of the Mother; she was cheerful and bright all the time, and her intelligence, already keen and penetrating, grew further with the growth of the Divine Child in her womb. The would-be Mother of the greatest Hero that was to be born, she now discarded the looking glass and began to look at her face in the lustre of a naked sword!

In this way the days of pregnancy (nine months and seven days) were passed. The birth of Bhagwān Riṣabha Deva was marked with many wonderful signs—the directions were clarified; a wave of peace passed over the entire universe, even the denizens of hells experiencing its electric thrill for a passing moment; the thrones of the Indras of heavens shook as if by the invisible agitation of a wireless wave!

Again the *devas* joined with men in celebrating the Birth of a God. They assembled in the

Royal Palace, filling the earth and the sky, and uttering ceaseless cries of 'Victory.' Then Sachi, the Queen of the First Heaven, took the new-born Babe in her arms, and carried Him to her Consort, the Indra. Together they started for the *Abhiṣeka* ceremony, followed by the entire host of *deva* tribes and clans. There is a vast rocky platform on the top of Mount Meru on which the ceremony of bathing the Gods takes place. The celestial procession soon reached this rocky platform, and there performed the divine *abhiṣeka*, amid great rejoicings. They seated the Divine Child on a Throne set with precious stones, and poured many pitchersful of water from a distant ocean over His head. The little divine Baby was not affected injuriously by the ceremonial bath. All those who are destined to attain to salvation are born in their last earthly incarnation with a bony formation that is possessed of adamantine strength. They cannot be cut, pierced or destroyed in any way. This is the effect of the great austerities they have performed in their previous lives! The Tirthamkaras have also got the adamantine formation of the bony skeleton, and are not affected by external physical forces or calamity.

Sachi decorated the person of the Lord of the Three Worlds with her own hands, after the

abhiṣeka (ablution). Many heavenly jewels were put on the person of the Lord. Then the processionists returned to the Palace of Nābhi Raja. Great celebrations followed in the Palace. The *devas* organized private theatricals, and much excellent singing and acting were seen by the mortal man that day. The Indra himself executed a brilliant dance out of sheer joy, to the great delight of all. The lord of a body that instantly obeys all impulses of the will, his dance was a wonder in itself. He changed many forms in the course of his movements, each one more wonderful than the rest. Such joy, such happiness, was unheard of in Ajudhya before!

When the heavenly devotees were gone, some *devas* remained behind to keep the young Lord company. They transformed themselves into children, and became the playmates of Riṣabha Deva, looking after Him in every possible way.

The child Tirthamkara was endowed by birth with clairvoyance and the knowledge of all kinds of arts and sciences. He needed no instruction to acquire wisdom or the knowledge of the three R.s. All the noble virtues had their abode, so to speak, in His being. Excrement—urine, fæces and the like—were not formed in

His body ; His blood was white,* like milk, and a delightful fragrance emanated from his person. All the marks of Sainthood and Greatness were present in His person. As for His disposition, from His very childhood He had the fewest desires, and was like a saintly recluse at heart. If it were not the wish of His royal father, He would probably have refused to enter into matrimony. Nābhi Raja had asked Him, saying, " O Lord, Thou really art the Father of the Three Worlds, for Thou art the Preceptor of all living beings; I am Thy father merely like an accompanying cause ! Be pleased to recognize the need for the establishment of the marriage sacrament, so that humanity may not misdirect themselves in that regard, and come to grief, through sheer inability to follow the example of great Celibates! " Thus addressed, Riṣabha Deva gave His consent with silence, accompanied by a very sunny smile, and the monosyllabic ' Om.'

Two accomplished and beautiful ladies, the

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* The Hindu acknowledgment of the fact is to be found in the challenge of their god Siva, who set up the fact that his own veins contained no fluid blood, but only ashes against the white blood of certain Saints. The justification for Siva's boast is furnished by *tapaścharaṇa* (*vairāgya*=austerities) which he allegorically represents, inasmuch as it signifies the burning up of all kinds of desires, that is to say in other words, the reducing of everything to ashes!

sisters (but according to another version, the daughters) of the brothers Kachha and Mahakachha were soon found for young Riṣabha Deva, and He was married to them under auspicious constellations. The constellations, indeed, are neither lucky nor unlucky in themselves ; but they are regarded as lucky when they become associated with such great events as constitute the land-marks in the life of a WORLD TEACHER! No doubt, stars, too, have a role of their own to play in the affairs of the world ; because, like other things, they affect and are themselves affected by other things in nature. But Great Men must be deemed to be an exception to the rule, as they are above misfortune and ill luck !

CHAPTER VI

FAMILY LIFE

हिमाह्वयन्तु यद्वर्षं नाभे रासीन्महात्मनः ।
तस्यर्षभोऽभवत्पुत्रो मरुदेव्यां महाद्युति
ऋषभाद्भरतो जज्ञे वीरः पुत्रशताग्रजः ।

[Tr. In the land called Hima Riṣabha of great brilliance was born to the Great Nābhi from Maru Devi. To Riṣabha was born Bharata, the eldest of a hundred sons, and a great hero.]—The Kurma Purāṇa (Hindu), LXI, 37-38.

Śrimati Yaśasvati Devi was the senior queen of Riṣabha Devaji. One night she conceived and saw four wonderful dreams. She first of all saw the enormous Mountain Meru swallow up the whole world ; then she saw the Sun and the Moon and the Mountain named ; thereafter, a Lake dotted with white swans, and last of all an Ocean agitated with waves. These were interpreted for her by her Husband the next day, and meant that her son would be the lord of the whole world, that he would be surrounded by the greatest glory and lordly pomp, that he would be endowed with all

the most excellent qualities and virtues, and that he would obtain salvation in that very life. Yaśasvati was overwhelmed with joy, on hearing the above description of her coming son from her illustrious Husband.

In the fullness of time a son was born to her, on the same day as that on which Bhagwan Riṣabha Devaji Himself was born (namely, on the ninth of the dark half of the month of Chaitra), when the moon was in the Uttarāṣādha constellation. Riṣabha Deva called his name Bharata. Bharata was one of the *ahamindra*-companions of Śri Riṣabha Deva in the Super-heaven Sarvārthasiddhi. His previous history from the time when he was Mativara, the minister of Bajrajangha, is already known. But a few lives earlier he was one Atigṛidha, who was the king of Vatsakāvati in the East Videha of the Jambu Dvipa. He was given to much sense-indulgence, and died with *raudra dhyāna* (immersed in highly evil thoughts). He found himself cast into the fourth hell. There he remained for a very very long time, and then became a lion. One day he saw the Saint Pihitāsrava, whose sight brought back to him the knowledge of his past. He was filled with dismay, and at once sobered down by the knowledge, and resolved to desist from evil, from that moment. He gave up all food at once, and resolv-

ed to die in the approved way. The result was that he became a *deva* in the second heaven, at the time when Lalitānga was there, and the two were thrown together. The friendship then formed continued and grew thereafter ; for he became in his next life, the minister of Lalitānga who was re-born as Bajrajangha. We already know the subsequent history of these great Souls, and of some of their most intimate companions.

Bharata's life may be taken as a fair illustration of the rise and fall which souls experience in the course of transmigration in the world. No one is privileged here ; no one can be said to be a favourite of Dame Fortune ; no one is secure against ill-luck and mishap. Kings literally go to hell, while fierce animals become *devas* ! Truly, there is no enemy of the soul greater than falsehood, and no friend more helpful than Right Faith !

Riṣabha Deva lived for an enormous number of years. He had a hundred sons from Yaśasvati. The number is actually confirmed by the testimony of the Hindu scriptures. First after Bharata came Vriṣabha Sen, whom we have already met in his incarnation of Bajrajangha's Master of Ceremonies, (the Pandit) Ananada. He, too, was in the super-heaven Sarvārthasiddhi.

Dhana Mitra's soul whom we recall as the

Financier of Bajrajangha, was the next son of Yaśasvati and Riṣabha Deva. He is now called Anantavijaya.

The ferocious king of beasts, who was filled with joy at the gift of food to a Jaina Saint, is now born as a son to the WORLD TEACHER. He is younger than Anantavijaya, and his name is Mahā Sen.

The soul of the Pig is also born in the same family, as Śri Sen (also named Achyuta).

The Monkey's soul now becomes Vira (also, Guṇa Sen). The Mongoose appears as Varavira ; and the other friends and companions of the previous lives of Riṣabha Devaji and Yaśasvati Devi, whose histories have not been given here, took birth in their family as the remaining ninety-three sons of the Tirthamkara from the senior Queen. She also gave birth to a daughter, who was called Brāhmi.

From his other wife, Sunandā, Riṣabha Deva had one son and one daughter. The son was Bāhubali, who was none other than Akampana, the generalissimo, of Bajrajangha, whom we have already met in the super-heaven Sarvārthasiddhi. The girl was given the name of Sundari by her worshipful father. Bāhubali was the first Kāmadeva (Apollo) in this age. He was exceedingly handsome, and possessed all the most excellent

and charming qualities. In accomplishments he was unrivalled.

As the sons and daughters grew up they were given suitable education by their father, the WORLD TEACHER, who knew all sciences and arts, untaught. He wrote out the alphabet for his daughters, and also taught them the figures. The alphabet came to be known as the Brāhmi script, after Brāhmi, who was the first to learn it. The daughters of the WORLD TEACHER proved very intelligent, and speedily mastered their lessons. In due course of time they became efficient in all household matters, and acquired a knowledge of the various arts and sciences as well as all the accomplishments that their parents desired them to acquire. Music and singing were naturally included in their attainments. They also understood the Science of Religion well ; and were so much impressed with the transitory nature of the world, that they resolved not to marry at all. The education of Bharata received the greatest attention from his parents. He was taught other things with his brothers ; but he was especially instructed in Law and the Science of the polity of kings by the WORLD TEACHER. Bharata also displayed a taste for dancing, and became very efficient in the art. Among the younger brothers of Bharata,

Vriṣabha Sen excelled in music, Anantavirya, in drama, Bāhubali in medicine, archery, floriculture, and the knowledge of precious gems. He was also clever in finding out the characters of men and women from their bodily marks.

The evolutionists are not likely to accept these statements readily. But they have not shown how men came to attain to omniscience when they should be chatting on the branches of forest trees, *visā-vis*, with the gorilla and the chimpanzee, and how religion came to wear the scientific aspect in the prehistoric antiquity of the past! The sanest bit of advice that can be given to modernity is to unlearn their library-loads of wisdom and to devote at least a couple of years to the study of books that deal with religion *as a science.* Then perhaps they will be qualified to talk on the subject, and their opinions will not be lacking in weight!

CHAPTER VII

PUBLIC LIFE

ऋषभाद्भरतो जज्ञे वीरः पुत्रशताग्रजः
सोऽभिषिच्यर्षभः पुत्रं महाप्राव्राज्यमास्थितः
तपस्तेपे महाभागः पुलहाश्रमसंश्रयः
हिमाह्वयं दक्षिणं वर्षं भरताय पिता ददौ ।
तस्मात्तु भारतं वर्षं तस्य नाम्ना महात्मनः ॥
भरतस्याभवत्पुत्रः सुमतिर्नाम धार्मिकः ।

[Tr. Riṣabha's son was Bharata. Riṣabha performed the *rājabhiṣeka* (installation ceremony) of Bharata, and entered sannyāsa (asceticism); and, abiding in the *vānaprastha* stage, the Fortunate One performed austerities! The country of Hima, which is to the south, was given to Bharata by his Father, and came therefore, after his name, to be known as Bhāratavarṣa. Bharata had a virtuous son by name Sumati!]—The Markaṇḍeya Puraṇa (Hindu), L. 39—41.

The *kalpa* trees of the *bhogabhumi* age had by this time completely disappeared, and the spontaneous cultivation also was not yielding sufficient food for the growing populace. Riṣabha Deva, therefore, taught them agriculture (cultivation of sugarcane and other crops) and other useful crafts and arts. He laid the founda-

tion of civic life, and taught men how to co-operate with one another for mutual benefit. The country was divided into provinces, these into divisions and districts, and the districts, into towns and villages. Kings and chieftains were appointed to govern and to regulate the routine of civic life. In all this Riṣabha Deva was assisted by the Lord of *devas*, whose advice was found very valuable.

The occupations and crafts that were taught to the people comprised fighting, letters, cultivation, trades, professions (such as carpentry, goldsmith's work, and the like), and arts such as singing, dancing and painting.

Those who fought came to be known as Kshatriyas, the traders earned the title of Vaiśyas, the rest were at first called *jaghanyaja* (small), later, *avara* (lowest or last), and finally Śudras. At first Vaiśyas were also called by different names, such as *aryya* (gentle), and *vaṇika* (trader). There were no Brāhmaṇas then; all were at liberty to pursue literature and none were debarred from education. The Śudras included all those who earned their living by manual labour or handicraft, and who served the Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas. Those who took to wrestling were also counted among the Śudras.

The date on which this arrangement was

made was the first of the dark half in the month of *Aṣādha*, which is the commencement of the *karma-bhumi* (sweating) *sṛiṣṭi* (creation, or order of things).

The people were now happy, and prosperity reigned generally in the land. They were very grateful to the WORLD TEACHER for all that he had done for them, and never wearied of singing His praises.

Some time after this Nābhi Raja installed Riṣabha Deva on the throne, and himself retired from the active concerns of kingship. Great celebrations again took place, in which *devas* participated.

It was some time after the installation ceremony that the WORLD TEACHER laid down the foundation of Aryan stability in the form of *varṇa-vyavasthā* (the rule of the caste). Three *varṇas*, not four, were laid down, corresponding to what may be described as the army, the trades and labour (in a comprehensive sense). The system owed its existence to political foresight rather than anything else. It was merely a threefold conscription. A class was set apart for warfare and the maintenance of order, internal and external; another, for carrying on trade; and the third was to prevent disruption for the want of servants, attendants, stretcher-bearers;

and the men who knew the arts and crafts. In times of war especially have all these three functions of the society to be maintained, as was found out by actual experience in the last Great European War (of 1914—18). The rule has a very great advantage over general conscription ; because, firstly, general conscription concerns itself merely with man-power, irrespective of the question who is to feed the armies and of labour, without which it is impossible to do anything practical, especially in times of stress. Secondly, general conscription attends to the physical side only of the problem of man-power ; it is incapable of *training* the mind, that is to say, of instilling the real military instinct in the soldier's heart. The conscription that was adopted by the WORLD TEACHER made a provision for the preservation of trade and labour at the same time as it aspired to make every soldier a hero. The true martial spirit that is wanting in a general conscription because of the lack of family traditions in the great majority of cases, is acquired at home and early in childhood by the mere incident of being born in the military class. There is none so humble in this group who may not be able to recall some sort of glorious ancestry to fire his imagination. Brāhmaṇas have really no place in this scheme, for education was never a

monopoly of any one class in the remote past, and no one was denied literary accomplishment.

The merit of the *varṇa-vyavasthā* is great; it enabled the Aryan Culture to rear its proud head over the din and fury of wars and the crash of empires in non-Aryan lands, throughout the long ages that have rolled by. No country in the whole world can show such long stability of indigenous culture as the Abode of the Aryan race!

The downfall of Aryan Culture within recent historical times is due to the failure on the part of the Kshatriyas to maintain their traditions. They were filled with arrogance, and fell fighting with one another oftener than in defending the mother-land. They lost the disposition that would breed amity and good-fellowship, with the result that they could not generally combine against powerful foreign foes, and were cut up individually. Superstition, due to chronic intellectual degeneration, for which the Brāhmaṇas are to be blamed whole-heartedly, as professing to be the sole custodians of the spiritual science, led them often to disregard the rules of good generalship, and made them look to the dispositions of the stars before marching out against a foe! Fanatical spirit, too, had its part to play in the downfall of the Aryan Empire. Generals

are found constantly disregarding the rules of military strategy and sacrificing away their own and their soldiers' lives in sheer madness of impetuosity. Another cause which played no mean part in the disruption of the Aryan Empire was the failure to benefit by experience. The foreign invaders repeatedly gave evidence of their determination to stick at nothing, that is to say, to make no scruples in obtaining the upperhand; yet were they always treated as if imbued with the spirit of Aryan chivalry, and true military honour!

Will the past glory of the Aryan Culture be ever re-established in this unfortunate land? India may become an equal partner in the British Empire or she may even obtain complete independence, but it seems impossible to think that we shall ever succeed in completely ridding the country of the undesirable things and customs and institutions that have established themselves in our midst. No doubt, Religion is able to accomplish miracles! If the whole world accepts the Teaching of Truth and begins to live up to it, the face of things will be changed at once, as if by a magician's wand! But it is easier said than done.

The Hindus hold that they were the founders of the caste-system; but the account they

give of it fails to explain the need for its origin, is mythological in its nature—Brāhmaṇas originating from the mouth of Brahmā, Kshtriyas, from his arms, Vaiśyas from his belly, and the Śudras from his thigh's—and ends in making one section of mankind eternally hate another, on the ground of blood-inferiority. The Jainas, on the contrary, recognise the basis of the system to be grounded on occupation, but not on blood, attribute its origin to man, and explain its need to lie in the establishment of stable, if not an everlasting, empire!

As for the origin of the Brāhmaṇa caste, it seems to have come into existence later on under Bharata. He one day invited the male residents of his capital to visit him at his palace, and so arranged things that only a small path was left for the people to pass along, unless they chose to go over the extensive grass plots on either side of the way. His object was to find out those who were the most tender-hearted among men, and who recognized the presence of a soul even in the lowly blade of grass. Those who would not tread on the grass he called Brāhmaṇas; because of their knowledge of Brahman (the divinity of life). The World Teacher condemned Bharata's action in undisguised language, and probably in the Jaina scheme of things, the

Brāhmaṇa class had no place, as an integral part of the caste system, till the time of the author of the Ādi Purāṇa, who seems to have again laid some emphasis on the distinction, to placate the Brahmanical hatred and win them over to protect the Jainas against bitter persecution at the hands of their co-religionists (Hindus).

The distinction of the touchable and the untouchable among Śudras seems to have grown much later. It could not well have been laid down by the WORLD TEACHER. Imagination is not comforted by the idea of a Divine Law-giver declaring all of a sudden that certain sections of men who had up to that instant been all as much touchable as any of the highest men that could be named, should thenceforth be deemed *pariahs* and social outcasts! What seems most likely to have happened is that after a time, the duration of which cannot be now fixed by any known definite land-marks, those of the Śudras who followed such professions and trades as the sweeper's, the shoe-maker's and the like, fell into filthy habits as a class, and were thenceforth denied social intercourse with the higher *varṇas*. Probably, their exclusion was originally based on economical factors rather than on any considerations of blood-inferiority. Those who today preach a general levelling down of all differences at once

forget one thing : that the sweeper of India is not only a sweeper while he works as such, but all the twenty four hours of his life. His house, his furniture, his clothes, his surroundings, even his person, are all a mass of filth from one end of the year—rather from one end of life—to the other! Before him his father was exactly like him ; and if you go back to his past you will always find his ancestry filthy and unclean! It is very desirable that these people should be treated as human beings ; but it is not to be supposed that the cause of cleanliness (said to be a virtue only next to godliness) can be advanced in any way by eating food from hands that are covered with filth or from those that suggest the association with filth. The effect of suggestion is well-known, so that the food that is taken from the hands of a person whose appearance, name or even voice is suggestive of filth and filthy surroundings will act exactly as if it consisted of actual filth! This is a powerful law of nature, as every one familiar with the theory and practice of hypnotism and auto-suggestion knows. Let us raise the depressed classes by all means ; but let us not lower those who are not depressed. The case of the European sweeper is not an instance in point. There are in Europe no such sweepers who can boast of a filthy ancestry as the Indian

bhangi can do! There a man may do the work of a sweeper but he is not a *bhangi* by birth, ancestry and living!

At the same time we must be on our guard against stretching the point too far, to suffer an exaggerated sentiment to mar the progress of an aspiring soul, which cannot but be productive of evil result in our own case. It is not every passing thought that takes effect as a suggestion; isolation, intensity and persistence are necessary for the purpose. And it is not every suggestion even that will lead to *nicha* (low) status in the future rebirth; for a suggestion can always be eradicated from the mind as easily it can be formed. Habitual association with actual filth will be required to produce an effect that is to accompany the soul after death and to lead to *nicha gotra* (status).

If the untouchables will change their condition and rise higher, let them get rid of their filth and the filthy surroundings, and so arrange matters that their appearance should no longer be suggestive of the extreme filth that it does today. It is not blood prejudice that is really working against them, but their own uncleanliness. To what extent the acute economical problem that is facing us will admit of their ridding themselves of filth, it is difficult to say; but it is

certain that they are not very likely to outstrip the generality of people, about 200,000,000 of whom do not get one full meal a day! Individual exceptions there will aways be to this as to all other rules.

Change of *varṇa* has always been permitted within certain limits which aimed at securing what may be termed appropriate *saṃskāras* (mentality, impressions, impulses), and the change of appearances and surroundings. In Jainism *varṇa* is to be fixed for a new convert, after a year's probation, according to his occupation.

After establishing the *varṇa*-system the WORLD TEACHER appointed four great Kshatriya warriors, namely, Hari, Akampana, Kāśyapa and Somaprabha, to rule over a thousand chieftains each. Hari came to be known as Harikānta, and his house as Harivanśa Akampana, who changed his name into Śridhara, founded the Nāthavanśa. Kāśyapa became the founder of Ugravanśa, and was known as Maghavavā. Kururāja, the name adopted by Somaprabha, is the starting point of Kuruvanśa. Śri Riṣabha Deva then appointed Kachha, Mahā Kachha and many other Kshatriya princes as Adhirajas (smaller chieftains) to rule over five hundred feudatory chiefs each. The Adhirajas

were themselves placed under the Maharajas.

The Ikshvāku *vanśa* arose in this way: the first thing that the World Teacher had taught men, on the disappearance of the *Kalpa* trees, was the use of the *ikshurasa* (cane-juice), which earned for him the title of 'Ikshvāku.' Subsequently in the course of a few years the term came to be applied to the family of Riṣabha Deva, whence the Ikshvāku *vanśa*. The World Teacher also earned the titles of Brahmā, Vidhātā, Sṛiṣtā and the like, which all signify creator, because of His being the creator of the (arrangements of the) *Karmabhumi* (sweating) civilization!

The Surya and Chandra *vanśas* arose out of the Ikshvāku *vanśa* somewhat later. They were founded by two of the grandsons of the World Teacher, the first-named by Bharata's son Arka Kirti, and the second, by Bāhubali's son Somakirti who was also called Mahābala.

CHAPTER VIII

WORLD-FLIGHT AND SANNYĀSA

" This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall,
Lord of himself, though not of lands;
And having nothing, yet hath all!"

—*Sir H. Watton.*

" Giving His kingdom to His son Bharata, Riṣabha entered the *vaṇaprastha* stage; and took to austerities . . . . His body became very feeble on account of austerities.*

" Riṣabha Deva having ruled with equity and wisdom . . . . resigned the sovereignty of the earth to the heroic Bharata, ... adopted the life of an anchoret, practising religious penance, and performing all prescribed ceremonies, until, emaciated by his austerities, so as to be left a collection of skin and fibres, and, naked, went the way of the 'great road' (महाप्रस्थानम्)."†

Great men cannot remain idle ; they have their work to do, which they have set before them, whether in this life or in the previous one or ones! When a major portion of the life of the WORLD

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* The Kurma Purāṇa, (Hindu), LXI. 38-39.

† See Wilson's Vishnu Purāṇa, Vol. II (Book II, Chapter I), pp. 103-104.

TEACHER was spent, the Indra of the first heaven came down one day with the materials for worship, and arranged a dance in the Assembly Hall. One of the celestial dancers was a certain nymph whose clock of life had only a few moments left to run. She was called Nilānjanā. Knowing that the time for the WORLD TEACHER's Great Renunciation was ripe, Indra had brought her with him to inflame the spirit of *vairāgya* (detachment or world-flight) in the mind of the Lord. At a signal from the Indra, she rose to dance, and entertained the audience with her superb performance. She probably knew the reason why she of all others had been asked to dance at that particular moment, and she danced as she had never danced before. The presence of the WORLD TEACHER in the closing moments of life filled her with courage and contentment and joy; she knew that her end was quite safe, and cared for nothing else. All present enjoyed her superb performance. All at once, while still in the middle of a process of crazy vigorous movements and turns, she staggered, then reeled back, and stopped, and the next instant her form 'dissolved' and was no more! Nilānajanā was dead!

The incident filled the assembled men and women with a sense of instability of life. They

looked on it aghast! The WORLD TEACHER needed no reminder, in reality, to detach Himself from the world. The fire that had been smouldering, in the secret, in the heart now leaped into a flame. He made up his mind there and then to say good bye to the world and to the good things of the world!

Deva-sages who had been watching the proceedings from the end region of the fifth heaven, immediately appeared to worship the WORLD TEACHER and to strengthen him in his resolve. They adored Him in suitable terms that were calculated to fill the mind with serenity and a sense of detachment from the perishable world.

The WORLD TEACHER placed Bharata on the royal seat, and appointed Bāhubali the heir-apparent to the Throne. He gave His lands and territory to His other sons and relations, according to their fitness and needs, and gave away much wealth in charity. Having done all this, He took leave from His parents, wives and kinsmen. The assembled *devas* and men then performed His *abhiṣeka*, and worshipped Him.

Riṣabha Deva then rose and stepped into the celestial palanquin (Sudarśanā by name) which the *devas* had brought for the occasion. First of all certain human kings carried the palanquin. After they had gone seven steps it was carried by

the kings of the Vidyadhara class from the distant Videha Kshetra; then the *devas* carried it to the Siddhārthaka forest, which is close to Allahabad. In those days the boundaries of Ajudhya and Prayāg (Allahabad) were probably conterminous, as the former was something like 96 miles long and 72 wide.

It was the ninth of the dark half of the month of *Aṣāḍha* with the Moon in the *Uttarā-ṣāḍha* constellation when the WORLD TEACHER turned His back for the last time on the world. The palanquin was placed on a huge transparent stone slab which had been placed there for the occasion, and the LORD stepped out and took His seat on it. It was now the evening time. The Lord sat under a banyan tree, filled with the spirit of *vairāgya* (world-flight) in the sitting *yoga* posture, facing the East. He saluted the Perfect Souls who had reached safety and *nirvana* before Him ; and full of cheerfulness and great enthusiasm pulled out, in five handfuls, the hairs of His head and face. The Lord of the celestials picked up these hairs, and placed them in a jewelled casket. They were subsequently dropped into the distant Ocean, Kshira Sāgar.

After pulling out His hairs in the manner described above, Riṣabha Deva proceeded to remove His clothes and the jewels that He wore.

He kept nothing with Him of the Worldly goods, and became a Digambara (destitute of all vestiges of clothes). He discarded not only all external burdens alone, but also as much of the internal burdens as He could at the time. By birth He was endowed with Clairvoyance in addition to the usual forms of knowledge with which humanity is endowed ; and He now acquired Telepathic Perception (the power to read the innermost thoughts of living and dead personages), in consequence of the great Renunciation.

No less than four thousand chiefs and chieftains followed Him on the Path ; but they merely did so either out of the regard they had for the WORLD TEACHER, or through a fit of passing enthusiasm, without really realizing what they were doing and why.

Knowing the powers of His Great Spirit, that had been developed through many lives in the past, the WORLD TEACHER became immersed in Holy meditation, resolving not to break His fast before the end of six months. He stood in the standing *yoga* posture, immovable like a rock, tranquil and undisturbed all the time!

Humanity in that far distant age all attained to giant stature, and the Lord looked like an immovable Mountain as He stood absorbed in holy meditation.

The four thousand followers of the Lord whose hearts were not illumined with knowledge or faith, soon began to feel uneasy. They tried to restrain themselves as long as they could; but were unable to stand there doing nothing, and were overpowered by hunger and thirst. They left the place, one after another, and dispersed in the forest, their fear of the men's ridicule and of Bharata's displeasure preventing them from appearing again in the world. Many of them put on aprons and loin-strips made of bark and leaves, and lived in the forests, each following his own fancy for becoming like the WORLD TEACHER.

It would be wrong to suppose that there was no real difference between the *tapaścharaṇa* of the WORLD TEACHER and of those who had merely taken to it in imitation of Him. The greatest difference between them lay in regard to the sense of freedom which stirred the WORLD TEACHER and filled Him with indescribable inward joy. The others had not given up the world of their own accord, and did not experience the Joy of Freedom, but sadness and sorrow at their destitution! The result was that while the WORLD TEACHER enjoyed inner happiness all the time, His imitators were merely regretting the 'foolish' step they had taken!



Statue of Mahavira in one of the Temples at Arrah

There was amongst those who, inspired by the example of the WORLD TEACHER, had taken to *sannyāsa* with Him one Marichi, who was one of the sons of Bharata. He was a great soul, who ultimately became the last Tirthamkara, Mahavira ; but at the time he was quite unable to understand and realize the Truth, and failed to withstand the affliction of hunger and thirst that assailed him. He fell from the high position that he aspired to attain, became a wandering mendicant, preaching all sorts of silly and senseless doctrines, in consequence of which he had to reincarnate even in hells many times, a few incarnations later.

The WORLD TEACHER'S *tapaścharaṇa* was a wonderful sight for all who saw it. People did not understand the *why* and the *wherefore* of the process at the time ; but they were struck with the amazing steadiness of that *dhyāna* (meditation) which nothing could disturb. Once there was some disturbance. Two impetuous youngsters, the sons of Kachha and Mahā Kachha, sought Him with a view to obtain some boons from Him. They had got nothing at the time when the WORLD TEACHER had partitioned His territory amongst His sons and kinsmen, and they felt that they had a claim on Him, because of their aunts who were His wives. They came, determin-

ed not to leave Him without getting a boon from Him. They caught hold of His legs, and began to pester Him with their verbal petitions for gifts.

That day the ruler of the *devas* of the Underworld (Pātāla) was sitting in his Palace when he felt his throne shake and quiver. With his clairvoyant vision he scanned the worlds to see what was happening in the universe that might account for the incident. He thus discovered the cause of the disturbance of the WORLD TEACHER, and flew at once to the Siddhārthaka forest to see if he could do anything to remove the element of disturbance.

The youngsters were still pressing their claims on their Uncle-in-law, when another devotee appeared on the scene in humble form. The newcomer worshipped the Lord in a suitable way, and offered Him adoration from his heart. He then turned to the young men, asking them not to molest the Divine Yogi ; but they in effect told him to mind his own business, though they used much flowery style and charming expression. Finding them obdurate, the new-comer now assumed his *deva*-form, and took them with him to the Mount Vijyārdha, in a distant continent, where he established two kingdoms for them among the Vidyādhara residents of that place. He then left for his own place in the Pātāla-loka.

The son of Kachha, who was known as Nami, thus became the king of fifty provinces, and Vinami, Mahā Kachha's son, of sixty. They were also instructed in certain mysterious arts by the *deva*, and acquired certain strange faculties and powers.

In this manner did the WORLD TEACHER continue with His meditation for the space of six months. He then set out to seek some kind of nourishment. But at that time no one knew what to give to the Divine Saint, and how. The WORLD TEACHER passed through many villages and towns, but no one was able to offer Him food in the way in which it could be accepted. Wherever He went people brought cash, precious stones, water to bathe, and even offered to give Him lands, but He did not want any of these things. Some did bring food to Him also ; but it was not prepared and offered in the proper way, and could not be accepted.

Six months more passed away like this, through which no food or water was taken by the Lord. But it was a mere incident for Him ; He was not disturbed by it in the least. Even ordinary saints are expected to remain unaffected by the non-obtainment of food. If death occur for want of nourishment, it will be only an incident, and no more ! He who has put his hand to the

plough must, on no account, look back. If the saint die under the circumstances, unmoved and unaffected by the want of food, it is a positive gain ; if he yield to the impulse of hunger, or die grumbling and cursing his hard luck, it is a 'fall'!

Riṣabha Deva was absolutely unmindful of the pangs of hunger, and never once bestowed a thought on the subject. He moved about still occupying Himself with Self-contemplation, and paying no heed to the physical needs.

Only once in the morning when people take their breakfast would He visit the habitations of men, and spend the rest of the time in holy meditation. Even in the morning He would merely pass through towns and villages without uttering a word and without asking for food from any one. In this way He reached the city of Hastināpur where lived king Soma Prabha with his younger brother, Śreyānsa. The latter had seen during the preceding night, towards the early hours of the morning, several strange dreams. In the morning, when he got up he found himself still thinking of them, and asked for their interpretation from his brother to whom he related them all. "They signify," said *the court Pandit who* happened to be present at the time and who heard them all, "they signify the arrival of great good

luck to your royal house. Some great Soul should come to you this day."

Only a few hours after this the WORLD TEACHER entered Hastināpur, and proceeded towards the royal palace. Śreyānsa saw Him coming from a distance, and ran out to do obeisance to Him, accompanied by his brother and others. The sight of the Lord agitated him greatly; there was a rush of some powerful emotion; an internal commotion possessed him for the moment. The next instant Śreyānsa knew himself. He recalled how Bajrajangha had given the gift of food to two holy saints in a forest one day, and how he was there, by the side of Bajrajangha! It was an old affair; several times since he had re-incarnated in different forms; still the memory came back with a rush, vivid and clear—at first Svayam Prabhā, then Śrimati, and now Śreyānsa! All these were but three phases, or complexions, of one and the same soul! Who said that the lot of woman in Jainism was hopeless? Śreyānsa knew it to be otherwise!

Full of affectionate devotion, Śreyānsa now proceeded to offer the refreshing juice of the sugarcane to the WORLD TEACHER, in the approved way, which he now recollected fully. There are many kinds of gifts which people make to one another; but of all of them the gift of food to a

true saint is the most meritorious, and as the Tirthamkara is the greatest of all saints, the giving of food to him with a pure heart that is illumined with the light of *Jnāna* (knowledge divine) and filled with reverence and devotion for the Ideal is the most meritorious of all. The *devas* witnessed the sight from the upper air, and rained down fragrant water, heavenly flowers and small gems on the assembly. They uttered loud shouts of "victory! victory" and beat the heavenly drums!

We have already seen the effect of the gift of food to two Jaina Saints in the case of four animal souls, namely, the Lion, the Pig, the Monkey and the Mongoose, who reached a *bhogabhumi* thereby! Of course, merit does not lie in the articles that are given; for they might be worth a couple of farthings and no more, as must have been the actual market-value of the sugar-cane juice that the WORLD TEACHER consumed! It lies in the purity of thoughts—the recognition of the recipient as the true Guide, of his *dharma* as the true Path, of his example, as the true *ācharaṇa* (Conduct or Life)—and the enthusiasm and delight with which the act of giving is accompanied. There is *bhogabhumi* in the gift only when the giver looks upon it as his greatest good luck to be able to serve those in whose footsteps he himself

has a longing to follow. There will be no merit in it if it only amount to the throwing of a morsel to a beggar or a 'dog.' Those who do not give the food themselves but who rejoice in the act of giving by another, and entertain the same noble thoughts which fill his mind, also attain to the happiness of a *bhogabhumi;* for it is only a question of the purity of thoughts and feelings. This is the reason why the *devas* come rejoicing on such occasions, when food is offered to some great Saint or a World Teacher.

Riṣabha Deva strolled away again into the forests after the partaking of the *ikshu-rasa* (the cane juice). All assembled praised Śreyānsa for his keen intelligence in finding out what was to be done on such an occasion and in succeeding where others had failed. Even Bharata came down from Ajudhya to congratulate him. To them Śreyānsa related his previous history and that of the World Teacher. They were all filled with wonder, and understood the reality of Life—surely, 'dust thou art to dust returnest, was never said of the soul!'

People now understood the manner in which food should be offered to a Saint. From this time onward there was no difficulty felt in this regard by men, when offering food to the World Teacher. The food—whatever it be—should

be pure in regard to its materials, pure in regard to its preparation, and pure in regard to the actual giving; it should be free from *himsā* (offence or injury to a moving living being), and should be given with reverence and respect and in a manner which does not imply the recipient's lowering himself in the least degree. For saints will rather starve than take anything when the procuring, the preparing and the giving of it will lower them, in their own estimation, in the least degree, or expose them to ridicule or contempt.

It was the third of the bright half in the month of Baisakh when the WORLD TEACHER broke His fast at Hastināpur. That day the royal kitchen could have fed the whole humanity, because food became inexhaustible miraculously, through the merit of the WORLD TEACHER'S presence. The event is still commemorated on the date mentioned, which is known as the *Akhaya* (inexhaustible) *Tija* (third)!

CHAPTER IX

OMNISCIENCE

" Wisdom guarded to the end the first-formed Father of the world that was created alone, and delivered him out of his own transgressions, and gave him strength to get dominion over all things."—II Esdras (Jewish Apocrypha) Chapter X.

" For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the son of man be."—Matthew xxiv. 27.

The fourth *Kalyānaka* in the life of a Tirthamkara is the attainment of Full All-embracing Knowledge, in other words, of Omniscience, by the destruction of the forces that keep it from blazing forth. There are four kinds of *karmas* termed *ghātiyā* (inimical or obstructive) which are responsible for the loss of this great and divine attribute in our case. They are known as knowledge-obstructing, perception-obstructing, serenity-obstructing (i.e., deluding) and power-obstructing energies of *karmas*. These inimical forces come into being by the fusion of spirit and matter, which is continually taking place in the case of the unemancipated soul, and are reinforced from

moment to moment, so long as it is not characterized by Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct. Right Faith is acquired only when the energies of fanaticism, and of the worst forms of the four principal passions, namely, of anger, pride, deceit and greed are destroyed. No one who is filled with fanatical spirit, or is agitated by the most malignant form of the passions named, will ever be induced to listen to reason, or to study Religion in the spirit of sobriety and rationality. Therefore, these five kinds of forces have to be destroyed, or subdued, to acquire Right Faith. The seeker has also to rid himself of the tendency to compromise between fiction and fact (mixed truth and falsehood) and of his superstitions, to be able to take a truly rational view of things. These seven kinds of *karmic* energies gone, he is qualified to acquire the Right Faith. Right Knowledge is really presupposed in Right Faith, since belief (faith) follows knowledge. But it does not arise before the acquisition of Right Faith, inasmuch as it is only knowledge free from error, doubt and ignorance that is termed Right Knowledge, so that before that stage is reached knowledge is merely tantamount to information. It becomes Right Knowledge as soon as the seal of belief is placed on it, eliminating the elements of agnosticism and doubt.

Right Faith and Right Knowledge being acquired, a beginning has to be made in respect of Right Conduct sooner or later, for without action nothing can be accomplished. The forces that stand in the way of progress on the path now are the lesser degrees of passions which are nevertheless still very powerful, and the energies that interfere with perfect serenity of mind. These can only be destroyed by one's turning the back, on, that is, renouncing the world in the fullest sense of the term. *Tapaścharaṇa* signifies the determination to have absolutely nothing to do with the good things of the world, that is to say, to refuse absolutely to be swayed by its temptations. If death intervene before success is attained, it does not matter a bit. The merit acquired is carried over by the immortal soul, and is so much actual gain, for the future.

Riṣabha Devaji brought much accumulated merit of *tapaścharaṇa* with Him from His previous lives. His Soul's inner forces were developed to such an extent that He possessed the most indomitable will, against which calamity and trouble knocked their heads in vain. He was even able to live without food and water for the whole period that He remained immersed in holy meditation, and for six months more thereafter when no one knew how to offer Him food proper-

ly. Death had itself received a death-blow from His hand ; and starvation could only release Him for ever from the tyranny of the flesh, if it could destroy His body !

Fearless, self-centred, self-controlled, the WORLD TEACHER moved about for a long period of time, engaged in holy meditation. He performed the severest austerities and *tapaścharaṇa*, to eradicate his *karmas* and thereby to separate His Soul from matter. According to tradition. He spent altogether 999* years 11 months and 2 days in performing the *karma*-destroying austerities. At last His *tapaścharaṇa* bore the desired fruit ; on the eleventh of the first, that is to say, the dark, half of the month of Phālaguna in the Uttarāṣādha *Nakshatra* (constellation)

* Great longevity seems to have been associated with huge stature of humanity in the remote past. The following item of news recently published in the (Indian) Statesman in its issue of the 16th October, 1929 is not unlikely to prove interesting, on fuller investigation, in regard to the alleged fabulous ages and heights attained by men in the remotest past: "It is claimed that a highly important anthropological discovery has been made on the Limpopo by an Italian scientific expedition which has arrived at Bulwayo. This discovery consists of an imprint in stone of an enormous human foot, indicating a type of prehistoric man of which no trace has hitherto been found. Professor Cipriani, of Florence University, who was in charge of the expedition, is convinced that the foot-print dates back hundreds of thousands of years, and is undoubtedly the most primitive in existence."

the veil of the Temple of Divinity was destroyed completely, and the Effulgence of Knowledge Divine, that is, full, all-embracing OMNISCIENCE, which like lightning, shines in one part but reveals the whole universe, flooded His Consciousness from within ! He was then sitting under a banyan tree in the Śakata forest close to the town of Purimatāla.

The details of the *tapaścharaṇa* need not detain us here. But such an event as the acquisition of omniscience was not likely to remain unobserved. The *devas* perceived it from the specific signs which accompany it in their regions, and flocked to worship the WORLD TEACHER, now become really qualified to teach and preach the Truth. Under instructions from the Lord of the first heaven, a heavenly Pavilion was erected for the Lord's Preaching, by celestial artisans. The WORLD TEACHER sat in this Pavilion, above a huge golden lotus, placed on a throne of heavenly gems, but so as not to touch it, sitting about a couple of inches above the lotus in the air. Here did the *devas* and men who learnt of the Illumination of the Lord flock together to worship the SOURCE of LIFE and LIGHT !

CHAPTER X

THE SAMAVASARANA

"For a whole year he stood erect. The Gods said unto him, Why standest thou, O Vratya? He answered and said, Let them bring my couch. They brought the couch for that Vratya . . . . The Vratya ascended the couch. The hosts of Gods were his attendants, solemn vows his messengers, and all creatures his worshippers . . . . . ."*—The Atharva Veda, Chapter XV.

The description of the heavenly Pavilion erected by the *devas* for the WORLD TEACHER'S preaching is beyond words. It was the work of *devas*, and excelled everything that the human

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* Griffith has the following note on the legend in his translation of the Atharva Veda (see p. 199, Vol. II):—

"It is hard to understand, and I do not attempt to explain, the idealization and the grotesquely extravagant glorification of the Vratya or heretical nomad who appears at one time to be a supernormal Being endowed with the attributes of all-pervading Deity, and at another as a human wanderer in need of food and lodging . . . . ."

But the story fits, most beautifully, into the framework of the Life of Riṣabha Deva, who was, undoubtedly, only a human wanderer at first, and who became, in consequence of the observance of the *vratas* (vows), an all-knowing (metaphorically, all-pervading) God, and was then attended upon by *devas* (gods) and worshipped by all creatures.



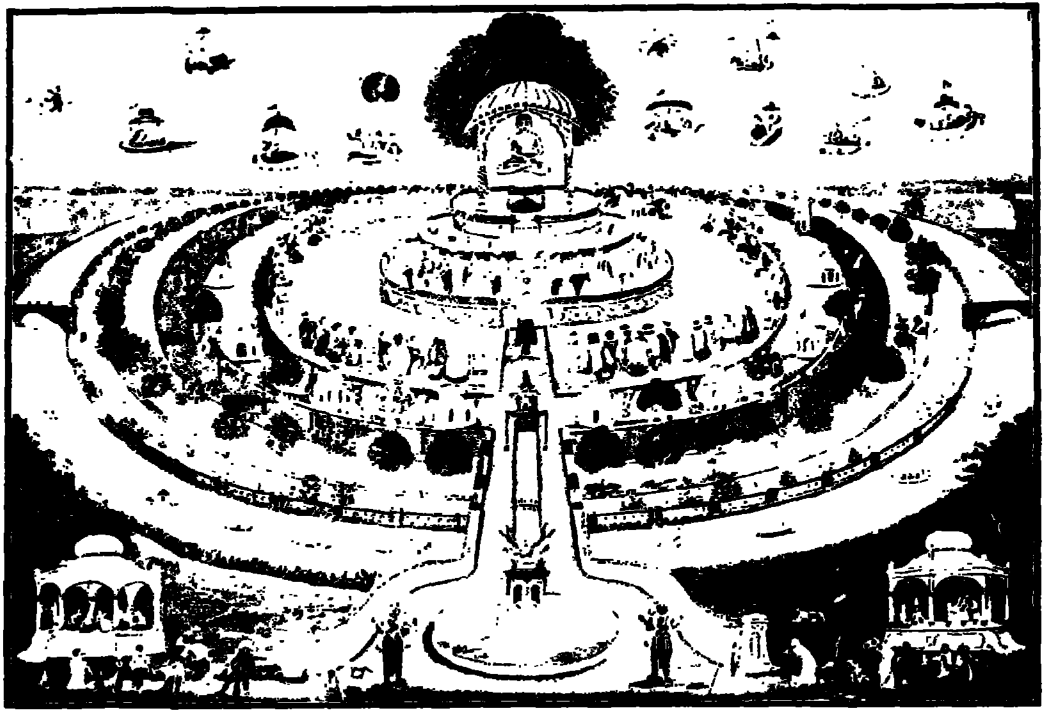
THE 'COUCH' (SAMAVASARANA) OF MAHA VRATYA (FROM A PAINTING IN THE BIG JAINA TEMPLE AT SEONI)

eye had ever beheld in the world! It stood above ground, circular in form, with a diameter, of 12 *yojanas* (a small *yojana* is equal to 8 miles, and a big one to 4000 miles). There was first of all a row of gold pillars surmounted with crocodiles' heads, which held strings of dazzling white pearls in their mouths. Pretty festoons of pearl-strings hung from these golden pillars and produced an extremely pleasing effect. Then came a wide border made with crushed gems of different colours, which glistened in the sun, producing rainbow effects all round. There were four wide roads, one in each direction, which, crossing the border of crushed gems, led into the centre. After the border of gems, on each side, was raised a huge column, called Mānasthamba (literally, pride pillar), the sight of which sufficed to lower the pride of the greatest of mortals, so lofty, so elegant and so costly was it in construction. Each of these columns stood on a raised platform of gold which was reached by a flight of sixteen steps. On their tops were fixed banners and flags that fluttered in the breeze, and festoons of pearls and precious beads were suspended from them. The platform itself was surrounded by three enclosures made of precious metals, with doors in every direction. Four beautiful lakes, filled with crystal water,

surrounded each enclosure on the four sides. Beyond the lakes was a moat that encircled the entire area. It was filled with clear water, and studded with lovely lotuses. On the other side of the moat, which was crossed by the four roads, was a forest, exhibiting a mountainous scenic effect. This was dotted with wooded bowers and raised platforms in the midst of clear spaces. Bordering the forest was a wall, made of pure gold, and set with precious stones, which was decorated with paintings of animals and female figures. There were four big gates in this wall, one in each direction, which were decorated with costly festoons of pearls and precious beads. Within the gates there was a theatre on either side of the road where *devas* and *deva*-ladies reproduced scenes from the previous lives of the WORLD TEACHER. As you proceeded further along the road you came to the place where two huge vases were placed on the two sides of the way, filled with fragrant incense, whose smoke rose, in thick columns, to the sky. From this place wooded avenues of the loveliest *asoka* (*jonesia asoca*), *champaka* (*michelia champaca*), mango and *saptaparṇa** trees led towards the Hall of the

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* The *saptaparṇa* is a kind of tree whose leaves range themselvs in clusters of seven, whence its name, from *sapta*, seven and *parṇa*, leaves.



THE SAMAVASARANA AFTER A PAINTING IN THE JAINA SIDDHĀNTA BHAWAN, ARRAH

Grand Assembly. In the centre of each of these avenues was a *peethikā* (platform with an enclosure-like construction) on which stood its specific tree. There were four Statues of the worshipful Arhant on each *peethikā*, which attracted *devas* and men by their supreme lustre, and which the visitors worshipped with devotion. Towards the end of the wood, on its four sides, were four raised platforms on which *devas* were engaged in producing excellent music. The doors of the enclosures of these platforms were of pure silver, the walls being made from pure gold. On emerging from the wood the traveller came across a row of fluttering banners which floated from golden staffs. They bore ten kinds of marks, namely, a garland, a piece of cloth, a peacock, the lotus flower, a swan, an eagle, a lion, a bull, an elephant and the discus. There were 108 flags of each specific mark in each direction, totalling 1080 of all kinds on each side, and 4320 in all the four directions. Behind the row of flags, at a suitable distance was a wall made from pure silver, which had a silver gate in every direction. This was like the first rampart in all respects, and also had a theatre on each side of the gate way, on the inside. At a little distance from the theatres were again placed two huge Incense Pitchers that filled the atmosphere with

fragrance. Beyond the Incense Pitchers, the road passed through a forest of *kalpa* trees of unsurpassed loveliness. Ten kinds of heavenly trees were scattered about in the wood in elegant confusion, and from their decorations and illumination, produced a fairy scene of exquisite loveliness. The light-trees in themselves produced the most enchanting scenic effect, surpassing all that the human imagination is able to conceive in the shape of fine displays of illumination and fireworks. Statues of the Holy Tirthamkaras were installed on platforms of gold, under trees of bewitching beauty, in the centre, in suitable places on all the four sides. Walls of gold formed the enclosures of the wooded tract.

Bordering the Wood was a row of houses made from precious metals and stones ; and beyond the habitations arose a line of nine stupas, which were made of *saphatik mani* (white gem) and had gates of ruby-red gem. Beyond the wall was open space, one *yojana* by one *yojana* (a *yojana*=8 miles usually), which was set apart for the Grand Assembly. The ground of the entire enclosure was composed of blue sapphire, and looked extremely pretty. In the centre of this open space was erected a *Sabhā Mandap* (pavilion) on golden pillars. The top of this *mandap* was of the purest transparent

gem; and it was divided into twelve compartments or halls, by means of walls of gold. The Throne was placed in the middle, on a raised platform, which rose up in three terraces of gold, set with precious stones. On the topmost terrace of this platform was erected a *gandhakuti* (bower) that attracted every eye by the loveliness of its design. Exquisite fragrance from lovely censers in which burned heavenly incense, emanating from it, filled the atmosphere. In the *gandhakuti* was placed the Throne of God, that was of the finest design and made with the costliest of gems. The WORLD TEACHER sat on this Throne, without touching it—about two inches above it. His face shone radiant like a thousand suns, shining in one place. Sixty-four Indras (Heavenly Kings) stood in attendance on Him, waving *chamaras*. Around Him sat the *gaṇadharas* (Apostles) and Saints in the first hall, one class of *deva* ladies in the second hall, nuns and women in general in the third hall, three other classes of *deva* ladies in the next three halls, separately, the four* classes of *devas* in the next

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* The four classes of *devas* are: (1) the residents of heavens, (2) the dwellers in the suns and moons and the stars, termed *jyotiṣi* (the stellar), (3) the *vyantaras* who loiter about and live in secluded places in the world, and those who reside in the lower region (the

four halls, separately, men in the eleventh hall and animals in the last one.

Among the wonderful acquisitions of the Tirthamkara, which are obtained as the result of the destruction of the *karmic* energies that stand in the way of the manifestation of the Divinity of the soul, may be mentioned the following: They are able to conquer gravitation and possess the power of levitation; They live without food and water; Their eyelids are never closed; shadow is not cast by Their bodies; and Their hairs and nails do not grow any more. They are not liable to be assailed by trouble or distress in any form; and 'peace and plenty' prevail wherever They go! Naturally-hostile animals become as friends in Their presence; ferocious natures are tamed! Flowers and fruits appear out of season wherever They go! When seated in the *Samavasarana* a Tirthamkara appears to be looking in all the four directions, though He only sits facing the East. The speech of the Lord is like the roar of many waters, and is distinctly heard by every one present. It is produced independently

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pātāla loka), the uppermost story of the topmost hell. Some of the *vyantaras* and the residents of the *pātāla loka* are sometimes seen by men. Some of them are playful and vicious, and at times not averse to enjoying a joke at the expense of man, which might account for the genuine kind of spiritualistic phenomena.

of the movements of the glottis, and is for that reason termed *anakshari* (without letters). The Apostles arrange the teaching of the Truth under twelve main heads (*angas*), and it is termed Śruti or *Śruta Jnāna*, because of its having been heard (from the TEACHER).

The *devas*, too, contribute their quota to the glory of the Tirthamkara. They clarify the directions for a considerable distance all round, making the ground look like a polished surface, devoid of thorns. They also translate the *anakshari* Speech of the God into different tongues, and place golden lotuses under His feet when He walks, raining flowers and fragrant water all the time! The cries of "*jaya, jaya*" (victory, victory) are also raised by the *devas*, men joining them in swelling the diapason.

All this, no doubt, reads like a romance, but as stated above the *Tirthamkaras* are not ordinary beings; nor are Their devotees all helpless and powerless like man. But for the glories appertaining to the Divine status of these Holy Ones They would not have been acknowledged in other religions, as They have been! The Hindu Atharva Veda has already been cited to show that *devas* attended upon and furnished a 'seat' to a great Vratya (Jina = Conqueror),

who is none other than Riṣabha Deva, the first WORLD TEACHER, presumably.

The word *samavasarana* is derived from *sama*, meaning general, that is common, or a dispassionate state, and *avasara*, signifying opportunity, and meant the place where all have a common opportunity of acquiring the Wisdom Divine, or, in the alternative, where souls get the opportunity to attain to dispassion.

The WORLD TEACHER sat in *Padmāsana* (a sitting posture), with His hands placed, one on the top of the other, in his lap, in the attitude of complete relaxation and rest, indicating that He had now nothing more left to sweat for! He was truly what is termed *krita-kritya* (one who has nothing further left to accomplish)!

Bharata, hearing the good tidings of the attainment by his Divine Father of Self-realization, came to worship Him. With reverence and affection and enthusiasm he offered adoration to the Master, and sang His praises for a long time. He then took his seat in the Men's Hall, and asked to be enlightened on the Spiritual Science by the WORLD TEACHER, who then began His Discourse.

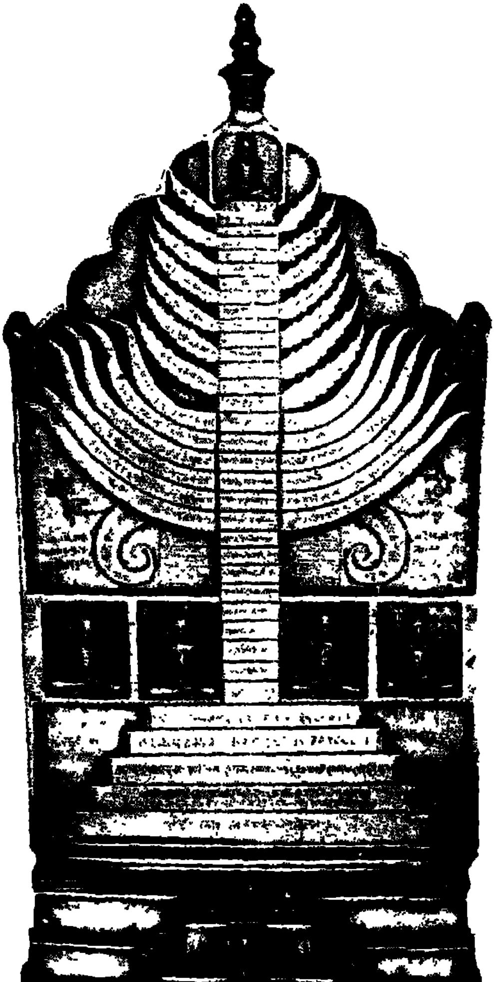
The Discourse Divine was like a shower of *amrita* (ambrosia), so tranquillizing, so cooling, so satisfying was it to all! The voice of the

Lord could be heard distinctly all round, and it was also being rendered into different spoken tongues by the *devas*, in different parts of the Great Hall.

The Lord's Discourse described the mysteries of the world in plain terms. It dealt with the nature of the existing substances and their attributes ; and showed how different properties came into existence when substances got intermingled. Amongst the substances the most important are Spirit and Matter, whose fusion is the cause of all the misery that there exists in the world. The Lord described the true *tattvas* (essentials of knowledge), and gave a detailed description of the entire subject of bondage and release of the souls. The knowledge imparted, constitutes what is known as *Śruta Jnāna*, and comprised all the eleven *angas* and the fourteen *purvas* of the Science of Salvation, as Religion may be termed. Every one understood what the WORLD TEACHER said; no one was mystified ; no one misled! Tirthamkaras do not indulge in metaphor and parable, and never resort to allegory, to hide the import of a doctrine. Those who were present were filled. Their questions were answered there and then, in the un-*akshari* speech which has been described above. Every one understood what was said in

answering his question. As a matter of fact, the Presence of the Teacher in itself furnished an answer to a good many questions of the assemblage. He was Religion personified in Himself! He was also the embodiment of Faith, Knowledge and Conduct—of the Way, the Truth and the Life, as some have said! One had simply to see Him to understand what Salvation meant. His illimitable Knowledge was reflected to a certain extent in the Halo of Glory which surrounded Him and which depicted the past seven lives of all living beings! To see Him was to see God, to hear Him was to be filled with heavenly joy!

The Lord's Discourse, which is gathered up by the Chief Disciples, comprises twelve *aṅgas* (departments), and is generally represented by a tree with twelve branches. It is this Tree of Wisdom Divine which is the real friend of the seeker after release from the pain and misery of embodied life; and it is not a mere coincidence that we read in the Bible: "In the midst . . . of it . . . was there the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of fruits* . . . and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." What this means becomes clear with reference to another part of the Bible itself (Proverbs, iii, 13—18): "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, ... Her ways are ways of pleasantness,



THE TREE WHOSE LEAVES ARE FOR THE HEALING OF NATIONS

and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her."

Immediately after the divine preaching, many men and women determined to follow the Lord on the Path. The foremost among them was Vriṣabha Sen, one of the younger brothers of the Emperor Bharata. He was the same who was the favourite *pandit* of the WORLD TEACHER in His Bajrajangha's incarnation. He became the first Apostle of the God. Soma Prabha and Śreyānsa, at whose Palace the WORLD TEACHER had broken His first fast likewise became two of the Apostles. Brāhmi, the elder daughter of the WORLD TEACHER, became the first female saint. Sundari, the second daughter of the Lord, also renounced the world, and joined the sisterhood of Nuns. A man by name Śrutakirti became the first Householder, and a pious lady, by name Priyāvarta, became the first lay female follower of the Lord. Another of Bharata's brothers, whose name was Anantavirya, at once became a monk. He was the first to obtain *nirvaṇa* in this half-cycle of time. We have met him ere this already and know his life-story from the Lion's incarnation! Many others joined the *Sangha* (Community of the Pious), all desirous of attaining release from perpetual slavery to Death, and bad luck.

The four thousand chiefs and chieftains who had renounced the world with Riṣabha Deva and who had slunk away from *tapaścharaṇa* now came back to Him and entered the *Sangha*. Marichi, however, kept away, and set himself up separately as a teacher.

After the departure of Bharata, the Indra of the first Heaven stood up to chant the praises of the Lord. He composed an adoration in which he described the Holy One by one thousand and eight auspicious names.

The *devas*, then, supplicated the World Teacher, through their Leader, in the following words :—" O Master Divine, O Preserver of Souls, O Protector of Life, O Giver of Joy to all Living Beings! the *bhavyas* (those who possess the realizable potentiality of divinity in their nature) in other parts of the world are in need of Thine Discourse Divine. They are like parched crops, which wither without rain and are revived by it! Do Thou now proceed to enlighten them! "

A procession was formed at once, the Lord proceeding on His Divine mission, surrounded by *devas* and men, in the midst of scenes of great enthusiasm and heavenly pomp, which the residents of heavens brought together to glorify the World Teacher.



STATUE OF MAHAVIRA IN STANDING POSTURE



Colossus of Bahubali at Shravana Belgola

CHAPTER XI

BĀHUBALI

ऋषभो मेरुदेव्यां च ऋषभाद्भरतोऽभवत् ॥
ऋषभो दत्तः श्रीः पुत्रे शालग्रामे हरिं गतः ।
भरताद्भारतं वर्षं भरतात्सुमतिस्त्वभूत् ॥
भरतो दत्तलक्ष्मीकः शालग्रामे हरिं गतः ॥१२॥

[Tr. From Maru Devi was born Riṣabha. To Riṣabha was born Bharaṭa; endowed with Lakshmi, Riṣabha attained to Divinity (*Nirvāṇa*) at Shaligram! From Bharata came Bhāratvarṣa and Sumati; endowed with Lakshmi (Excellence) Bharaṭa attained to Divinity at Shaligram!]—The Agneya Purāṇa (Hindu), CVIII. 11-12.

Three great events had occurred simultaneously in the life of Bharata before his departure to worship the WORLD TEACHER, as described in the last chapter. Each of them was pregnant with momentous import, and the harbinger of unparalleled joy. One of them was the attainment to Full Knowledge by His Divine Father, the WORLD TEACHER; the second was the appearance in his arsenal of the heavenly weapon,

the irresistible *chakra* (discus), and the third was the birth of a son to himself! He was literally overwhelmed with joy on hearing the news, and did not know at first which event to celebrate before the others. He, however, at once decided to proceed to the Lord's *Samavasarana*, to Worship the Divinity Incarnate, as the worship of God was the source of all good in the world. Today we shall be told that by the birth of a son as well as by the death of a member of his family a man becomes impure and disqualified to worship God for a certain number of days, even when the event occur at a great distance or in foreign land. Bharata did not stop to trouble himself about such matters. Perhaps the injunctions were unknown in his time. Certainly, the Worshipping of the *Deva* of *devas* (God of gods) would appear to be the harbinger of all good luck and auspiciousness, and not likely to be forbidden on any occasion. The reason of the prohibition against visiting a public place of worship under the aforesaid circumstances is not far to seek. It would cause too much commotion and disturbance in the Temple and in the process of worship if men went there fresh on the top of an event like the death or the birth of a member in their family. Men would be eager to know what had happened, and would be prone to

discuss the particulars of the event, whether good or bad. To avoid all this hubbub and commotion was the object of the rule against the admission of worshippers likely to furnish an occasion for disturbance in worship. Similar in nature would be the explanation of the exclusion of the women suffering from the monthly effusion of blood. For the presence of blood on a slovenly woman's clothes or of blood drops on the floor of the Adytum and the courtyard of the Place of Worship cannot but be an unsightly thing. Today the reasons for these rules have been forgotten, and that is why we look upon every infringement of such an injunction as at once fatal to the Dharma, and to the transgressor and to everybody else!

When Bharata reached home, he first visited his arsenal where he beheld the glorious discus; and then went to see his son. He welcomed the new-comer with paternal affection, and afterwards proceeded to his Court House, where he determined to take to camp life* to subdue the world.

From the world-conquest Bharata returned home after the lapse of very many years, laden with booty and costly gifts from the numerous kings who had paid homage to him, and accompanied by many princesses, daughters of the vanquished foe, whom he married. A good

many of these ladies belonged to the *maleksha* race; but Bharata did not hesitate to accept them for wife! At one time such marriages were quite common, it would seem, but now they have become obsolete. The last Jaina King to marry a *maleksha* princess was Chandra Gupta who flourished about two thousand two hundred years ago, and who married, as history points out, the daughter of the Greek General Saleukus Niconar. And Chandra Gupta was no ordinary Jaina; he was the favourite disciple of Śri Bhadrabāhu, the last *Śruta-Kevali* (literally all-knowing by hearsay, that is indirectly)! Here is real food for reflection for those who pin their faith to blood-superiority. There is a great deal to be said in favour of the comparative cleanliness of different professions and of the habits of men; but we must not be carried away by pure sentiment and place arbitrary valuation on the higher standards. It is enough if a girl is allowed to marry high, though a man may not do so, generally. For the girl that enters into a purer atmosphere is cut off from her lowlier associations, and is soon improved, whereas, in the converse case, the girl entering into a lower class must become permanently debased herself. It will be noticed that the girl passes completely out of her paternal

family on her marriage, but not so the man! So far as the upper classes (Brāhmaṇas, Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas) are concerned, the discussion is almost a purely academical one, except in so far as the general prejudice against traders has everywhere led the aristocracy to close the doors of society against them. Many instances are to be found in the Purāṇas of Vaiśyas marrying Kshatriya girls and even the daughters of Brāhmaṇas. The difficulty is only experienced in dealing with the cases of inter-marriage between Śudras and the higher *Varṇas*. But the examples of Bharata and Chandra Gupta show what the practice used to be in the past.

On returning to his capital, Bharata demanded submission from his own brothers, which was naturally refused. But all of them, excepting Bāhubali, felt that they could not face Bharata on the battle-field, and renounced the world, placing their sons on their thrones in their own places to avoid the humiliation. Bāhubali, on the other hand, hurled open defiance at the Emperor and challenged him to a fight. Bharata was indignant at what he regarded as unbrotherly conduct of Bāhubali, and marched against him at the head of a large army. The two armies at last came face to face with each other. But before the commencement of open hostilities, the

ministers on both sides met together to see if the undesirable bloodshed could not be avoided in any way. They came to an agreement that it would be quite useless to proceed with the war in the ordinary way. "The brothers themselves," they said, "cannot be killed by any means; they are in their last incarnations in transmigration, and possess bodies which no weapon may mortally wound in warfare! Let them fight out the issue by themselves in other ways." It was decided that they should settle their dispute by means of three kinds of contests, namely, staring (at each other), water-fight, and wrestling.

Bāhubali overcame Bharata in all the three contests, but instead of throwing him down on the ground in the last one (wrestling), he lifted him up on his shoulder and then gently placed him on the ground, out of an affectionate regard for his seniority and rank. This infuriated Bharata all the more, and he immediately possessed himself of the irresistible *chakra*. The weapon whizzed through empty space like a flash of lightning; but it did not strike Bāhubali. Instead of striking him, it merely circled round him, and then came to rest in front of him! Bāhubali had won! The explanation of the strange behaviour on the part of the terrible thunderbolt (the *chakra*) probably, lies in the

personal magnetism of Bāhubali which even over-mastered and turned off the fiery discus.

Bharata's action was disliked by all present. Bāhubali was filled with disgust for the world, whose infatuation could produce such intoxicating effect even on a good man like Bharata. "The kingdom," he said, "is for you, brother mine! I will have nothing more to do with this world of tantalizing shadows!" Saying this he left the world, went to the WORLD TEACHER, who had gone to Mount Kailāsa in the meanwhile, worshipped the Holy Feet of the Lord, and discarding all clothes and everything else of the world, entered the order of homeless monks! Bharata's heart was softened at his brother's renunciation; he apologised for his rashness, but could not dissuade him from his firm resolve.

For a whole year Bāhubali performed the severest austerities, standing motionless immersed in contemplation. Creepers grew up round his legs in this period; ant hills sprang up about him. But notwithstanding these austerities he could not get rid of the irksome little thought that he stood on Bharata's land. This stood in his way, and did not admit of his destroying his four kinds of inimical *karmas*. At last at the end of the year, it occurred to him that common lands were not capable of exclusive proprietary posses-

sion and that saints could use such lands without lowering themselves in any way. About the same time Bharata himself came, in all humility, to him, and worshipped him with veneration and respect. Bāhubali was then able to quell the disturbing element in his thoughts, and soon succeeded in his effort to destroy the *karmas* named. According to another version, the thought that was disturbing Bāhubali's meditation was a kind of painful regret that he had been the cause of his elder brother's humiliation, which was dispersed when Bharata came and worshipped him with reverence and affection.

Bāhubali attained Omniscience, as the result of complete dispassion and the supreme tranquillity of the mind! *Devas* and men now came to worship Him and to hear His discourse. He preached the Noble Doctrine for some time, and finally obtained Complete Release at Mount Kailāśa! He is now abiding eternally, in the uninterrupted enjoyment of Eternal Life, Perpetual Youth, Omniscience and all other Divine attributes! And He will stay in the same state till the End of Time!



STATUE OF BHARATA IN STANDING POSTURE SHRAVANA BELGOLA

CHAPTER XII

BHARATA.

بہت مضبوط گھر ھے عاقبت کا دار دنیا سے
اوٹھا لینا یہاں سے اپنی دولت اور وھاں رکھنا

Bahut mazbut ghar hai āqebat kā dār-i-duniyā se:
Uthā lenā yahān se apni daulat aur wahān rakhnā!

[Tr. Much safer is the House of the next world than that of this one:
You should withdraw your wealth from here, and place it in the next world!]

Many people read ' blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the world '; but it was Bharata who realized it! Men hear that the fruit of renunciation is a hundred million fold; Bharata actually enjoyed the abundance of it!

Bharata's wealth was immense. There was none who could count his treasures. He possessed a countless number of precious gems of great value. His horses, his elephants, his war and other kinds of chariots were counted in millions. Huge armies followed him when he went on war. Thousands of great kings, and tens of thousands of smaller chiefs and chieftains were proud to be

among his followers. There was no independent king in those days to be a rival to Bharata. His dominions were scattered all over the world ; his authority was acknowledged both on land and sea. He had crossed high mountains and carried his campaign successfully on the other side. There is a mention of certain hidden passages in the mountains by means of which he had emerged in new continents, and brought the lands under his sceptre.

Bharata was undoubtedly one of the greatest of human kings that have ever ruled in the world. His splendour has never been surpassed, and but rarely equalled. His court was just one dazzling blaze of brilliancy. The pick of the best of everything was always at his command. Great generals and kings vied with one another in showing him respect!

Bharata had a very amiable nature ; he was exceedingly forgiving and peaceful, and possessed a spirit of gentility that was very captivating. Probably the only time when he forgot himself was when he felt irritated after his failure in the trial of strength against Bāhubali. But he repented of it almost immediately, and made ample amends for it subsequently by going to worship the latter when he had become a saint. This shows that he cherished no resentment in his

heart, the fit of irritation having completely passed off without leaving a scar.

Bharata was a perfectly just king. His sense of impartial justice won for him the esteem of all his subjects when he reprimanded his own son and condemned his unwise deed in the spirit of uncompromising severity. The incident had occurred at the *swayamvara* of a certain young princess where his son Arkakirti was also present. The king of Vārāṇasi (modern Benares) in those days was the founder of the glorious Nātha *Vanśa*. His name was Akampana, and he had a daughter, who was accomplished and beautiful beyond words. When she grew up her father took counsel of his friends and well-wishers, and convened a *swayamvara* (literally, the selection of a bridegroom by oneself), agreeably to the world-old practice of the Warrior races. Many princes and chiefs came to the gathering, conspicuous amongst them being Arkakirti, the Emperor's son, and Jayavarmā, the son of Soma Prabha of Hastinapur, at whose House the World Teacher had partaken of the sugarcane juice.

Sulochanā, for this was the name of the lovely Princess, threw the garland of flowers round the neck of Jayavarmā, as a mark of her preference for him. At this Arkakirti became

excited, considering it an insult to himself and to his illustrious father, and challenged both Jayavarmā and Akampana to a fight. These kings who entertained a great deal of respect for the Emperor and love for his impetuous son, tried, in every way, to dissuade him from the course he desired to take. But all their efforts were fruitless; Arkakirti was bent on fighting, and would not listen to their entreaties.

In the fight that took place the allied armies of the kings of Hastināpur and Vārāṇasi were victorious. But Akampana hd really the heart of a Jaina! He conciliated the youthful prince, and married his younger daughter, Akshamālā, to him. After the departure of Arkakirti with his bride, Jayavarmā and Sulochanā were united, with due pomp.

When Bharata heard of the misbehaviour of his young son, he was very angry with him, and bestowed much praise on Jayavarmā and Akampana for their restraint. Finally, the incident only came to be regarded by all the parties concerned as a happy mishap that ended in permanently cementing the friendly relations between the two royal houses of Ajudhya and Hastinapur!

Bharata was the first law-giver of the current half-cycle. He instructed the men of the Kshatriya and Brāhmaṇa classes in the duties

pertaining to their *varṇas*, and taught them many things. For this he came to be known as the sixteenth Manu, the fifteenth being Riṣabha Devaji. The law he gave forms part of the Upāsakādhyayana Anga, which is now only available in fragments. The one great point in respect of which the law he gave to the people differs from all the other systems that are now prevailing in India concerned the position of the woman. He made her a full heiress of her husband's property, and placed her before the son! The effect was wonderful; for it saved the son from idleness, and taught him to acquire proficiency in work and trade, and endowed him with pleasing mannerism! In a joint family the rule is for the sons to loll about in idleness; exceptions are rare. In the Jaina family the rule was work, efficiency and fitness! Arrogance, even boorish and unmannerly arrogance, might develop under the one system, but it would have nothing to support itself upon in the other.

It would seem that the three kinds of punishments, namely, corporal punishment, physical detention and monetary fine, were known in the time of Bharata, who knew how to temper justice with mercy, and taught others to do so. He encouraged partition as it tends to increase the merit of individuals; and recognized wills and trusts.

Bharata is said to have laid down what are known as the fifty-three *kriyās* (rites) for the followers of the Path. These were described at the time when he brought the Brāhmaṇa *varna* into being. He invested the Brāhmaṇas with distinctive sacred threads, comprising one or more strings, according to the number of the *pratimā* (stage on the householder's path) the wearer had attained. Thus a man who wore a thread of seven strings was a *brahmachāri* (celibate) on the seventh *pratimā*, and he who wore one with eleven strings was on the eleventh, or the last, stage of the householder's path, and only one step removed from *sannyāsa* which he would enter as soon as he is able to discard the small strip of the loin cloth that marks the boundary between the householder's and the saint's careers.

The ideals originally set before the Brāhmaṇas included, amongst others, the following:—

(1) they must devote themselves to worship, both regular and special ;

(2) they might earn their living by the sword, the pen, agriculture, or trade, but not by handicrafts or such other professions as music and singing ;

(3) they should practise charity ;

(4) they must apply themselves to study (the scriptures) ;

(5) they should practise equanimity and self-control, protecting the different kinds of lives ; and

(6) they should practise *tapaścharaṇa* (austerities) in some form.

It was thus not forbidden to a Brāhmaṇa to carry on a trade, or to enter on a military career, or to take to literature or even to plough the land. He was only required to refrain from pursuing those occupations which though not a disgrace in themselves were nevertheless not adopted by the higher classes. His self-respect was thus assured to him, if he did not wish to accept gifts from others. Today all this is changed, and the modern Brāhmaṇa is very near satisfying Akbar's description of a *pīr* (saint), a *bāvarchi* (cook), a *bhishti* (water-carrier), and a *ḳhar* (donkey), all rolled into a single being!

Another point in respect of which the modern Brāhmaṇa differs from his ancestor of the past is about the sacred thread which was not to be worn unless one attained at least the first *pratimā*, but which is now worn by not only all Brāhmaṇas but also by all the members of the

three higher *varṇas.* As a matter of fact there was no Brāhmaṇa class at the time of Bharata *Chakravarti*, strictly speaking, for any one could qualify himself for the sacred thread by observing the *pratimās*, it not being forbidden to Śudras to observe the *pratimās.*

The reason for the establishment of the Brāhmaṇa class lay in the necessity of finding out suitable donees for gifts which householders are enjoined to make every day. Bharata, who wanted to earn merit for himself, by making proper use of his immense wealth, established the class, or rather the order of the pious men, and gave them the sacred threads to indicate their rise in the spiritual scale. None who did not excel in the practising of the *Dharma* (religion) were to be considered Brāhmaṇas. "By birth," says the author of the Adi Purāṇa, "are all men equal unto one another ; but they differ in respect of the progress they might make on the spiritual path !"

The Hindus, who are really Jainas—not Jaina dissenters, but Jaina Allegorists—and the originators of the Allegorical vogue, allegorised the *varṇāśrama* institution, which came, after the lapse of a long time, when the original nature of the teaching underlying the allegory was lost sight of, to be viewed as grounded on birth-dis-

tinction. This is the reason why Hindus have been eternally finding fault with the Jainas and accusing them of "caste-lessness," that is, of being the destroyer of the caste system. The author of the Adi Purāṇa, who was alive to the need of propitiating Brāhmaṇa opinion in times of persecution, probably laid stress on the importance of the Brāhmaṇa caste to pacify them a bit, and is for that reason forced to have recourse to a language which is ambiguous to say the least of it. Bharata's preference for the Warrior class is obvious from the terms in which he speaks of them in the forty-second *parva* (part) of the Adi Purāṇa; but he distinctly says even with regard to them that merit, and not birth, is the principle of excellence. "Whosoever is admitted into the Jaina Dharma," he makes Bharata say, "and takes to the observance of vows becomes a Kshatriya!" The conferment of special privileges in regard to criminal responsibility on Brāhmaṇas might thus be the work of the Brāhmaṇas themselves, when they got into power later on; but it might as well be due to an impulse on the part of Bharata himself. If we remember that Bharata's Brāhmaṇas were all saintly householders, who would be eager to confess their crimes and to make ample amends for the deed, we can readily imagine justice tak-

ing a lenient view of their guilt, and a pious king pardoning the unfortunate offender altogether. Probably there would be in such a case a general petition for mercy, in which the injured man, or his heirs, would not unlikely join!

The scheme of the rites which Bharata taught his subjects is grounded entirely on what is known to the moderns as the Law of Suggestion. From the very inception of life an endeavour is made to impress it on the mind of the individual that he belongs to the noblest of all races, the Aryan, and that he is going to be a great man, and may even become a *chakravarti*, and a Tirthamkara! The *mantras*, too, which are uttered and recited on ceremonial occasions are intended to serve the same purpose, at the same time as they tend to inculcate a belief in the Divinity of the Soul, and the Principles of Dharma. There can be no doubting the fact that a child that has grown up under the influence of such powerful suggestions must, sooner or later, acquire and display something of that greatness which his Imagination has been impressed with. In the Aryan Culture *samskāras* (impressions, convictions) it were that counted the most; they could make or mar a life, without a doubt! Here again it must be said that the moderns have completely misunderstood the purpose of these rites, and of the

mantras with which they are accompanied. They think that power lies in the *mantras* themselves; but how can misunderstood formulas help any one in acquiring greatness? Mere sounds (*mantras* in a tongue that is not understood) count for nothing; it would be foolish to expect them to make a proper impression on any one's mind, much less on that of a small child. And what force can a few muttered or mumbled sounds possess against persistent intelligible suggestion to the contrary which is dinned into one's ears daily? For no sooner does the mystified child go out into the world outside, after the ceremony at home, than his friends and associates do not leave a stone unturned in impressing upon his mind that he is a big idiot, a dullard and a dunce, and an impudent imp! Today the harmful suggestion, conveyed in the vulgar language of the street, as a matter of fact, takes deep root and produces men that are nothing but burning libels on the Aryan name! This is because it is persistent and intelligible, while the really healthy one is lost in the mist of unintelligibility and hieroglyphics. Let us be warned in time, before further damage is done!

Bharata was endowed with clairvoyance which he evolved out on one of the occasions when he went to worship the WORLD TEACHER.

He taught men the science known as *Nimitta Jnāna*, which is not the art of foretelling future but that of predicting the occurrence of certain events by means of their appropriate characteristic forerunners (signs). He also instructed men in the Sciences of astronomy and medicine. Bharata was an accomplished master and a perfect judge of the elephant and the horse ; and understood all about their marks and ailments, in which he also instructed his people.

In regard to religion Bharata was devoted with all his heart to His Divine Father whose Image he had installed on the altar of his heart, where he worshipped Him day and night, whenever he got time to do so. Filled, from his childhood, with the spirit of world-flight, he adopted the five vows of the householder's course, early in his career, and observed them, without blemish and faltering, throughout life, irrespective of the fact whether he was at home or on the battlefield. He lived in the world but without being attached to it as ordinary men are. A saint at heart, he never abandoned himself to sense-indulgence, or allowed his better nature to be overpowered by the animal in him. He knew that the first great thing for a Kshatriya was to take care of his intellect; for through the right kind of intellect one could attain to the

Glory of a Tirthamkara, and through a wrong one, be degraded into lower forms after death. Bharata, therefore, was never upset at anything; he always knew precisely what was the best thing to do under any given circumstances, and handled complex and complicated problems with a grace of ease that endeared him to all !

Bharata had a missionary's zeal for the propagation of Jainism. He laid down rites (*kriyas*) for the admission of all classes of men into the Jaina Religion and the Jaina Society, providing even for the fixing of the castes of the new converts. Even *malekshas* could be admitted into Jainism without objection or hitch in his time!

Such was Bharata, the illustrious son of the Most Illustrious father, the first Emperor of Aryāvarta, and the Founder of the Aryan Culture, who lent his name to the Land of the Noble Race, which it still bears! Bharata will undoubtedly live in the memories of men, so long as Bhāratvarṣa remains above the waters to remind men of the first Great Emperor of the current half-cycle!

CHAPTER XIII

PEEPING INTO THE FUTURE

Bharata was never quite at ease in his mind about the wisdom of the step he had taken as regards the establishment of the Brāhmaṇa class, since he knew that his Father, who could have done it as well, had not seen it fit to do so. One night he saw a number of dreams which alarmed him a bit, and he decided to question the WORLD TEACHER about their import. So he proceeded to Mount Kailāśa where Riṣabha Deva was staying at the time, and after worshipping Him with reverence and devotion, related his dreams, and humbly sought their explanation from Him. He was told that his dreams bore reference to the next age (the *panchama kāla*) which would be marked with much deterioration and misery.

The first dream was the sight of twenty-three lions, roaming in a forest and then climbing up the summit of a hill. The WORLD TEACHER interpreted it to mean that in the day of twenty-three out of the twenty-four Tirthamkaras, Jaina Saints would remain steadfast to their austere ideal, and prove worthy of saintship.

The second dream consisted in the sight of a lion followed by a number of deers. This signified that in the time of the last Tirthamkara all saints would not be able to adhere to the high ideal of saintship, and there would arise many householders who would propagate and spread false doctrines and recommend 'easier' conduct.

In the third dream Bharata had seen a horse burdened with the load of an elephant. This meant that the Saints in the *panchama kāla* would undertake vows beyond their capacity and endurance.

A number of goats were seen grazing on dry leaves in the fourth dream, which portended that people would generally abandon the principles of true piety and defile their vows in the *panchama kāla* (the current age)!

In his fifth dream Bharata saw a monkey seated on an elephant in place of man! The WORLD TEACHER explained it to mean that in the fifth 'age' kingship would pass out of the hands of true Kshatriya races and be enjoyed by those who would be as far away from true Kshatriya traditions as a monkey is from man!

In the sixth dream a swan was being attacked by a number of crows. Its significance was that the Jaina Saints would be persecuted by men of other creeds.

A gnome's dance constituted the seventh dream, and it foretold that people would begin to worship demons in the fifth *kāla*, in place of the True Divinity!

A tank full of water all round, but dry in the centre, was seen next. This meant that Religion would disappear from the Aryāvarta, and would spread in the surrounding countries, occupied by *Malekshas*!

A lustreless heap of gems covered over with dust was seen next. This signified that in the *panchama kāla* saints would be unable to attain to the purity of *śukla dhyāna* (pure self-contemplation or meditation of the higher type) !

A dog feeding on sweetmeats and being worshipped by men was seen in the tenth dream. Its import was that low class persons would parade as worshipful men and would be actually worshipped by the people !

A bellowing young bull was seen next. This meant that people would generally enter the holy order in their youth in the fifth *kāla*, instead of in old age !

In the twelfth dream Bharata saw the Moon surrounded by nebulous matter. This meant that the saints would be unable to acquire even clairvoyance and telepathy in the *panchama kāla*!

Two bullocks going together were seen next,

implying that the saints in the *panchama kāla* would be unable to attain to the purity of conduct necessary to enable them to roam about singly!

The Sun covered over by clouds was seen next. It meant that no one would be able to attain to Omniscience in the *panchama kāla*.

A dried-up tree that cast no shade was the subject of the next dream. Its significance was that in the *panchama kāla* the generality of men and women would abandon religion, and become irreligious!

The sixteenth and the last dream consisted in the sight of dried up old leaves, and meant that the power of even great medicines would deteriorate in the end!

As regards the wisdom of the establishment of the Brāhmaṇa class, Bharata was told that his action was justified so far as regarded the requirements of his times, but that the class would be filled with conceit for its high birth, and Brāhmaṇas would take to eating meat in many cases and would become generally hostile to the true *Dharma* (Jainism) in the *panchama kāla*!

We may be sure that Bharata was not quite pleased with the forebodings or with the step he had taken in creating the fourth, namely, the Brāhmaṇa *varṇa*. He went back to his kingdom from the *Samavasarana* of the WORLD

TEACHER, and began to enjoy the fruits of his previous good *karmas*, as the first great *chakravarti* king!

The *panchama* (fifth) *kāla* (time, hence the period of time) is the one that is actually current now. It is the period of advanced deterioration, characterized by conditions of existence that would slowly become very painful and distressing. It commenced only 2455 years ago, and has still got 18545 years to run. There will be wars, famines and pestilences during this period, with the result that men will be half-starved and will grow stunted in size, till at the end of the period they will be no more than one cubit in height, and twenty years in age. All this will take place gradually, almost imperceptibly, and in some places there will even appear periodic signs of growth. The arresting of the downward movement will, however, be a temporary affair. The tendency generally everywhere will be for things to go from bad to worse. In respect of religion, Bhāratvarṣa will become irreligious, and the *maleksha* countries lying round about it will take it up. This part of the prophecy is likely to be soon fulfilled. For Religion can only live in the land of intelligence, but Bhāratvarṣa can only boast of about five per cent of literacy today. And out of this small propor-

tion of literate men and women the number of those who are really intellectual will be perhaps one in a thousand. It may be safely taken then that the intellectual centre of the world is shifting from India to foreign lands! What is most likely to happen next is the discovery of the soul-nature by European and American peoples, which is likely to be made in the course of the current century, thus fulfilling the Jaina prophecy!

Throughout the *panchama kāla*, however, Religion will continue to exist on our globe. The continuity of the *sangha* (community of the faithful) will be maintained right up to its very end. There will be at least one saint, one nun, one householder, and one pious female follower of the Lord Jinendra in the world. When only three moments will be left in the running *kāla*, *rājā* (kingship), *agni* (fire) and *dharma* (religion) will be destroyed, one after the other, in the order mentioned! The last king, who will be called Kalki,* will snatch away the food from the

* Kalki also figures in Hinduism; but there he is an allegorical figure and in glaring contrast with Jainism. He is the destroyer of *dharma* and a wicked persecutor of the pious in the latter, but the establisher of the true *dharma* and the destroyer of its foes in the former! This antagonism is, however, only apparent and caused by the employment of an artistic form of allegory which while professing outwardly to differ

hand of the last Saint, and will be destroyed by *devas* for his extreme impiety. The Saint and the Nun will perform *sallekhanā* death, along with the householder and the pious lay lady. Fire will disappear instantly, and *dharma* will cease to exist in the next moment !

Thereafter the sixth *kāla*, likewise of 21,000 years, will supervene. It will be the worst of all. People will keep on deteriorating, and the suffering and misery will be intolerable. Cooking will be unknown ; for there will be no fire ! People will take to raw meat, which they will bite off from living animals and even men. Law and order will be replaced by lawlessness and disorder. At the end of the sixth *kāla*, a great calamity will befall the world ; for forty-nine days there will rain down on it fire and ashes and burning cinders ; hot winds will scorch up all the surface of the soil, and it will be ripped open to a great depth ; all living nature will be destroyed, excepting those who are able to hide themselves in deep ravines and caves or who are

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from the Jaina view, in reality, implies no difference at all. For the Hindu Kalki is the destroyer of the soul's internal enemies—passions and appetites and the like—who will establish the Kingdom of God in the human Heart, while the Jaina Kalki will be an historical enemy of the Faith and of the followers of the Faith, who will be a man of flesh and blood in the outer world !

accorded protection by some beings of the super-human type. Thus will end the sixth *kāla*. The catastrophe, however, will not be universal all over the universe.

At the commencement of the new order of things in the next half-cycle of time, the *Utsarpiṇi*, which is the reverse of the ascending ark, the course of events will be changed. It will be the period of prosperity, and increase and rise. The forty-nine days' destruction will be followed by a different and opposite kind of phenomena during a similar period of time. Cold winds will blow on the earth; cooling things—curds, milk, etc.—will rain down on its surface; the signs of destruction will disappear from its face! Those who have survived will emerge from their hiding places, and inhabit the earth once more. The first Tirthamkara of the *Utsarpiṇi kāla* will appear at the end of 42,000 years from its commencement. He will re-establish Religion in the world!

The above prophecy would seem to admit of a rational explanation. Let us suppose* that two huge revolving bodies of contrary natures, but of

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* Or, in the alternative, let us suppose, the earth to run amok from some such cause as the depletion of its hidden strength—petrol, coal and the like—or the order and regularity of the solar system to be disturbed from

the comet type are slowly approaching our world, and would come the nearest to it at the end of the sixth *kāla*, of the running half-cycle. Let us further suppose that the first one of these bodies to draw near to the earth will be the comet with a fiery nature, like that of the sun. Its approach will then be characterised by all the indications given in the prophecy—the deterioration of vegetation, the disappearance of fire, because of the lack of fuel, the blowing of hot winds, the showering down of hot cinders, burning dust and the like. The destroyer will remain in the vicinity of the earth for the space of 49 days, which will be full of calamity for all living nature. It will then depart and recede further away. The other comet with the nature of the Moon will then draw near, when there will occur the opposite kind of phenomena—the blowing of cold winds, the raining down of cooling things, curds, milk, 'ambrosia,' and the like! Humanity will now reappear on the surface of the earth, and will once more inhabit it. It will take them about 42,000 years to be restored to a state of civilization which will admit of the advent

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some unknown cause, so that the earth is brought scorchingly near to the sun for the space of 49 days, after which it is drawn nearer to the moon for a similar period. Then all the terrible phenomena of the prophecy are likely to occur as described.

of a World Teacher, to enlighten them on Religious Truth!

As regards the snatching away of the morsel of food by the last king from the hand of the last Saint, its explanation may be sought in the fact that cooked food shall have become scarce long long before the end of the *panchama kāla*. Perhaps the influence of the advancing fiery comet will be reinforced by the drying up of the stamina of the earth in consequence of the constant tapping to which it is being subjected, in one form and another, so that vegetation shall begin to dry up, fuel shall become scarce, and cooked food a rare delicacy many hundreds of years before the end of the 'age.' At the end of the age the only living pious householder shall have procured the last bundle of chips to prepare the last meal for the Saint and the Nun! Law and order will have virtually disappeared long before this time, and the last king will probably be no more than a mere powerful bully. He will be attracted by the sight of the smoke from the householder's kitchen and will rush to help himself to cooked food, the greatest of delicacies at the time. He will arrive just in time to be able to snatch the first morsel from the hand of the Saint. The *devas*, who do not usually interfere in human affairs, will be unable to tolerate such

an insult to Saintship, and will take revenge on the king. In the next moment the little bundle of faggots shall have burnt itself out, and fire will become a thing of the past! *Dharma* (Religion), which cannot live except in the hearts of men, must likewise perish when those who cherish it and put it into practice are gone. This is probably how the king, fire and *dharma* (religion) shall be destroyed, one after another, in three successive moments of time, at the end of the current age (*kāla*)!

CHAPTER XIV

THE COMMUNITY OF THE FAITHFUL

अष्टषष्टितीर्थेषु यात्रायां यत्फलं भवेत् ।
श्रीआदिनाथदेवस्य, स्मरणेनापि तत्फलम् ॥

[Tr. The merit that may be acquired by going on pilgrimage to sixty-eight Tirthas (Holy Places), is acquired by the mere thinking of God Adinath.—(Riśabha Deva)!] Hindu Adoration (untraced).

Jainism marks a distinction between the higher and the lower orders of its followers. The community is divided into four classes, namely, Saints and laymen (termed householders) among males, and nuns and pious laity among females. The division is grounded on the principle that all men and women cannot be expected to come up, all at once, and without long and adequate previous training, to that high ideal of self-effacement that demands the selling off of all one is possessed of and its distribution in charity.

There were eighty four Apostles of the World Teacher, amongst them being Vriṣabha Sen, Kachha, Mahā Kachha, Nami and Vinami whom we have already met in this narrative. Jaya Varmā was also one of the Apostles of the *Tirthamkara.*

There were no less than 20,000 Omniscient Saints who followed the Holy Tirthamkara. 12,700 saints were endowed with Telepathy, 9,000 with Clairvoyance; and 4,750 knew the entirety of the twelve departments of the Teaching of Truth! There were 20,600 Saints who enjoyed wonderful miraculous powers. Many other saints followed the Lord. Of this vast number by far the major portion attained *nirvāna,* the rest re-incarnating in the heavens. All the most intimate friends and companions of the World Teacher who were with him in the super-heaven Sarvārthasiddhi also reached *nirvāna.*

Three hundred and fifty thousand nuns, headed by Brāhmi, followed the World Teacher. No less than three hundred thousand householders who were training themselves by the observance of vows and other forms of disciplinary processes worshipped the Lord. The number of the pious female followers was five hundred thousand, in round figures.

Some of the members of the animal kingdom who recollected their past lives followed the Lord, some of them adopting some of the minor vows of the laity.

Jaya Varmā who has been named among the Apostles of the WORLD TEACHER was the same who had married Sulochanā in the *svayamvara*, at Varānasi, and who had taken the Emperor's son, Arkakirti, a prisoner on the battle-field. Many years afterwards, he had come to worship the Source of Dharma one day, when he was filled with the spirit of world-flight and *vairāgya* (renunciation). Regarding the world as transient, and life, as the plaything of death, he determined, there and then, to free himself from the eternal bondage, went back to his kingdom, placed his son on the throne in place of himself, and took leave of Sulochanā and of all the other queens and kinsmen, and became a homeless Monk.

Sulochanā was much affected by the incident ; she was very sad at heart, and accepting the counsel of Bharata's favourite queen, Subhadrā, who was noted as much for her wisdom as for her physical strength, she sought refuge from the afflictions of this world of tears at the worshipful feet of Brāhmi, and became a nun. At the end of her earthly life, she was reborn in the

sixteenth heaven, prior to her last human birth when she would attain salvation from the male form!

With Jaya Varmā many of his younger brothers, Vijaya, Jayanta, Sanjayanta and others, and many princes gave up the life of the world to follow the Path, and take the shaping of their destiny in their own hands, from those of the blind and unmerciful nature!

King Akampana, too, of Varānasi, the father of Sulochanā and the establisher of the *Swayamvara* ceremony in this half-cycle, about this time felt an overwhelming disgust for the life of the world, and sought refuge at the Worshipful Feet of the World Teacher from perpetual death. He placed his son, Hemangada, on the throne, and proceeded to the Lord's *Samavasarana*, where he became a naked saint. His queen *Suprabhā* also became a nun at the same time.

CHAPTER XV

NIRVANA

इत्थं प्रभाव ऋषभोऽवतारश्शंकरस्य मे ।
सतांगतिर्दीनबन्धुर्नवमः कथितस्तव ॥
ऋषभस्य चरितं हि परमं पावनं महत् ।
स्वर्ग्यं यशस्यमायुष्यं श्रोतव्यं च प्रयत्नतः ॥

[Tr. Thus will there be the Riśabha Avatāra (incarnation) to me, Sankara (Siva, allegorically Vairāgya, that is Renunciation); which will be the ninth incarnation that will take place like the Path for the good people and as a patron of the helpless! The life of Riṣabha is exceedingly pure; one should hear the life of Riṣabha which is the giver of heaven after death and the cause of increase of fame and the length of one's years.]—The Siva Purāṇa (Hindu), IV, 47-48.

"Because of her (wisdom) I shall have immortality, and leave behind an eternal memory to them that come after me."—II Esdras (Jewish Apocrypha), Chap. VIII.

The passage quoted above from the Jewish Apocrypha furnishes a complete answer to the question that has been recently raised, whether it is selfish for a man to seek his own salvation and to leave the others involved in suffering and misery?

No one who has not completely eradicated all tinge of passion, even of sympathy and love, from his nature can ever be qualified to enter *nirvāna* or to attain to Omniscience which must precede it. After the attainment of Full Knowledge *nirvāna* follows as a necessary consequence, because of the extensive destruction that has been effected in the formations of organising bodily energies (*i.e.*, *Karmas*).

It is also a delusion to think that you can save all. As a matter of fact you cannot even carry enlightenment to every one. It is a question of the internal psychology of the mind whether an individual is ready to accept the teaching of truth or will spurn it. The souls who are still involved in misery and suffering have not unlikely met some of the great Teachers of the race in the past ; but without having derived any benefit from their association. There are many souls that shall never be saved, as is the teaching of almost every rational religion prevailing to-day. What, then, will happen to those who do not enter *nirvāna* from the love of others or for fear lest they be termed selfish? Their numbers will go on swelling from day to day, but they will never have the opportunity to enjoy the rest and repose for which they have laboured and which they have earned and deserved and

which they may enjoy but for the short-comings of others! And unless we accord them perpetual life in the flesh which no religion really ever preached, they would also be subjecting themselves to repeated births and deaths from which they sought to escape!

The Soul that attains to *nirvāna* cannot be accused of selfishness by any means. Before crossing over to the other shore the Saved Ones impart the True Doctrine to their immediate disciples and followers and to all who care to hear it, and these, in their turn, hand it down to others, thus keeping the torch burning, from age to age, so far as it is possible to do so. Their example is even more forceful than their word, since imagination is readily fired by the one and not so much by the other. When entering *nirvāna* the Deified Man leaves three priceless things behind Him for the eternal benefit of those who seek the Way Out. These are : His great Example, His Worshipful Footprints, and His Teaching, which should really suffice for the enlightenment of all who are sincerely moved by a desire to understand themselves and to escape from Death's Domain. If the counter-theory were true, and men did not enter *nirvāna* because it would be selfish to do so, no one could have obtained salvation thus far, so that *nirvāna* itself

must be deemed to be quite empty of Souls even to-day! And so far as practicability of the Doctrine is concerned, it cannot be deemed to have been demonstrated even in a single instance, since no one is to be deemed to have attained to *nirvāna* thus far! But this is too absurd to be acceptable in any sense.

When a fortnight remained in the life of the WORLD TEACHER, the *Samavasarana* dispersed ; and the Lord proceeded to accomplish the destruction of the remaining *karmic* forces of the non-inimical type that still adhered to His Great Spirit. It was the last (*Purṇamāśi*) day in the month of Pauṣa on which He seated Himself in the middle of the two summits Sri Śikhara and Siddha Śikhara of the Mount Kailāśa, and applied Himself to pure Self-contemplation of the higher type. He sat in the sitting posture, facing the East.

On the night preceding the *Purṇamāśi* day, Bharata and others had seen several portentous dreams, towards the end of the last watch. Bharata saw the huge Mountain Meru extending to the Place of the Perfect Ones. His son Arkakirti saw a huge Tree possessing medicinal properties moving up towards the heavens, after curing living beings of their ailments! The Chamberlain of the household of the Emperor, too,

saw a dream, in which he saw a huge Wish-fulfilling Tree, capable of gratifying all kinds of wishes, rising up in the sky! Jaya Varmā's son, Anantaveerya beheld the bright Moon ascending into the higher regions of the Sky, surrounded by a number of stars! Her Imperial Majesty Queen Subhadrā, the daughter-in-law of the WORLD TEACHER and the favourite wife of the Emperor, saw the Indrāni (the Queen of the first Heaven) consoling Yaśasvati and Sunandā, the two co-wives of the Lord! The Prime Minister of Bharata saw a Jewel Island rising up in the sky; and Chitrāngada, one of the sons of King Akampana of the *swayamvara* fame, beheld the Sun vanishing into the Sky with great lustre!

These dreams created a sensation in Ajudhya and Vārāṇasi. Bharata was still discussing them with his men when one Ananada brought the news of the dispersal of the *Samavasarana*, and of the WORLD TEACHER's applying Himself to the eradication of His remaining *karmas*. The Emperor immediately proceeded to the Mount Kailāśa on the aerial vehicles of his Vidyādhara feudatory kings, and there performed the worship known as the *Mahāmaha* for a whole fortnight.

At last on the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month of Māgha, at the time of sun-

rise, when the moon was passing out of the Abhijit (the tail of the Uttarāṣādha) constellation, the Lord resorted to the third form of the holy *Śukla dhyāna* (self-contemplation), termed *sukshmakriyāpratipāti* (literally having the slightest bodily tinge), and destroyed the three channels of the approach of matter, namely, the mind, speech and the body! He immediately attained to the fourteenth and the last *guṇasthāna* (psychological station on the Path), from where, adopting the last form of the holy self-contemplation (*vyuprata kriyānivṛiti*, signifying a cessation of all kinds of organic activities), He passed into *nirvāna*, in the space of time required to articulate the five vowels a, e, u, ṛi and ḷi! The next instant marked the appearance of another Perfect One to grace the Holy Land of the Abode of Gods in *nirvāna*, at the top of the Universe!

The Perfect Souls that reach *Nirvāna* are free from birth, death, old age, disease, grief, pain, hunger, thirst and worry. They have no bodies, and do not sweat. Pure Spirit by nature, They enjoy uninterruptedly, and for ever, all those incomparably divine attributes and privileges which appertain to the simple substance of Their Being. It is impossible to enumerate all the virtues of even such common substances as silver and gold, and it is equally im-

possible to count or describe all the wonderful properties of the Soul-substance! The *Siddhas* (Gods) enjoy Omniscience, Immortality and unthinkable, unsurpassed Bliss; They see and hear all, as if They were present everywhere! They have no loves and hatreds left in Them, and do not grant boons to friends or show disfavour to foes. Their divine Example, Their Teachings and Their Footprints are left for those who, disgusted with the world, seek a way out of this Cannibal's (Death's) Cave! Those who walk in Their Footsteps become in all respects like Them as regards the innate Divinity of the Spirit substance, and speedily reach the Holy *Siddha Śilā*, to sit by Them!

The first WORLD TEACHER of the current half-cycle of time, too, is now living in the *Siddha Śilā*, at the Top of the Universe, endowed with Immortality, Perpetual Youth, Full All-embracing Knowledge, and Supreme Bliss! He will never come back, or fall into transmigration again!

Some fresh arrivals in the field of religious metaphysics think that the state of *nirvāna* is but a temporary one, and that the soul will have again to fall back into transmigration, sooner or later. But the truth is the other way. There is absolutely no cause left for a fall in that case:

for matter cannot influence the soul against its will (see 'The Key of Knowledge'), and Omniscience is a guarantee against the entertainment of desire. As a matter of fact, it is simply impossible for a pure Spirit to be moved by any kind of desires. Clement of Alexandria may be quoted to explain the point. Writes he :—

"For it is impossible that he who has once been made perfect by love, and feasts eternally and insatiably on the boundless joy of contemplation, should delight in small and grovelling things. For what rational cause remains any more to the man who has gained the 'light inaccessible' for reverting to the good things of the world?"—Ante Nicene Christian Library, Vol. XII. pp. 346-347.

On the physical side of the question, the eternal exclusion of matter from the purified spirit-substance it is that prevents the falling back of a Perfect Soul into bondage and transmigration. The Bible has it as to this : "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie" (Revelation xxi. 27). This is really the Jaina view, and the scientific explanation of the fact that the Perfect Ones never experience a fall through infinite time. "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall

not be destroyed " (Daniel vii. 14) was said with reference to the Perfect Soul! It is useless to labour the point any further, suffice it to say that the misconception will be removed as soon as the subject is approached in the true spirit of scientific investigation.

But what shall we say to those good men who find fault with the attainment of Divinity itself on the ground that one shall have nothing to do then? Let us ask them what they will like the Gods to do? Will they have them stand behind counters and sell dainty ribbon to pretty ' butterflies ' from a heavenly or earthly May Fair? Will you have them enter into the service of one another, or perhaps come down to join the staff of a big ' stores ' like Selfrige's? Possibly you are thinking of an insurance business, where the Gods might be more useful than men? But no insurance company will flourish if omniscience is there to tell most of its intending customers that they run no risk of immediate death. A more dignified line is perhaps that of law. Shall we, therefore, imagine the King's Bench Division presided over by a properly robed Divinity. But wouldn't that be the death of the lawyer class, who will be ready with their precedents and protests, and object to His Lordship's appearance, with all the rhetoric of their tongues?

Only kings and ministers and generals remain to be thought of now. No doubt, it will be very gratifying to have an actual God as one's worldly patron and protector. But he will have to be partial to one country or people in that case, for in the very nature of things he cannot be all over, as an earthly king. And will not that mean the starvation of the politicians and the ministers who draw fat salaries and thrive on their wits? But the worst still remains to be said : he will not fight your battles as a king, but advise you to " turn the other cheek " and to ' give away your coat and cloak both ' when even only one of them is claimed, justly or unjustly, by some of your wicked neighbours! He will also not sanction our attempts at keeping down certain races of men nor the lynching of the ' niggers '!

Let us look the facts fully in the face : when do we feel really happy, when entering upon our duties, or when leaving office for the day? No doubt, it is very desirable and necessary that men should learn to discharge their duties. There are various reasons for this. Firstly, because no one can hope to attain salvation unless he discharge his obligations as an honest man. Secondly, because our constitution is such that we cannot—on account of our embodiment in a sensory-motor organism—refrain from action,

which if not honourable and good must necessarily be of the opposite type, which is not to be recommended. *Thirdly*, we keep in a fit state of health by action, and are thrown out of balance with internal well-being by laziness. Lastly, an idle 'loafer' is despised all round as he earns nothing, and tries to fasten himself to some one else who does. But the Gods with whom we like to find fault have no sensory-motor organism left to think of, and stand in no need of earning a living. They will not be what they are if they did that!

There is another point in regard to which God-life might be objectionable. For it does not furnish opportunities for gossip and the tea-party chit-chats! But does any one really want an answer to this? Who needs such a diversion? He who is eternally happy, or he who is feeling bored and worried, and who is out of tune with himself? The fact that it is looked upon as a change in itself is a strong condemnation of our ideals of worldly life. Would we be seeking 'change' if it did not bring relaxation from work, and, therefore, also pleasure?

It only remains to consider the case of sciences and arts. A God surely could save man much trouble if He instructed us in these departments. But would that suffice to save him from the charge of *eternal* idleness? The instructions

can be given in no time. He would require no laboratories, nor stand in need of experiments to learn wisdom about nature's ways. What should he do, then, with himself for the rest of his time, for the rest of all eternity? And how do we know that Gods did not impart knowledge of useful things to men before leaving the world? We have seen that Bharata himself imparted the knowledge of Medicine to the Aryan race. Is a God to be blamed because men are unable to retain what they are taught?

The very essence of Divinity consists in the sense of Freedom. The Gods alone are truly free! They have no work left to be done ; there are no worries; no anxieties, to mar Their immeasurable Peace. No private loves and hatreds remain to sway Them now in one way and again in another. They are at all times filled with such happiness that cannot be rescribed in words. And it is not that They have taken a leap in the dark, or bought a pig in a poke. They have deliberately worked for Their ideal and status, life after life, steadfastly and with unswerving fidelity. They could have gone back at any time, if They did not know that happiness lay that way. As a matter of fact, ascetics feel such joy, when on the higher rungs of the ladder, that they cheerfully endure all kinds of sufferings to attain to

it finally. Let us not forget that pure spirit is a very different kind of substance from matter and flesh. It needs no 'healthy' exercises to keep itself fit. It needs no food ; nor does it ever feel miserable or bored. Let us ask only one question from our critics : can you have immortality at any of your worldly stores or picnics and tea parties? Has your wildest flight of imagination ever led you, ere this, to think of the possibility of omniscience? Did you ever entertain the idea that another, and eternally satisfying kind of delight, was, over and above your miserable sense-gratification, within the bounds of possibility? If your answer is in the negative, then it is best to leave these subjects to those who did not only conceive these possibilities, but actually attained to them. You may, if so advised, take to the easier course of denying them altogether!

CHAPTER XVI

VRIṢABHA SEN GAṆADHARA

अजर, अमर, अक्षय, शरण, अविनाशी, अविकार ।
आदिपुरुष अधीश जिन बन्दौं बारंबार ॥

[Tr. Again and again I salute the First (Perfect) Man, Sri Riṣabha Deva, the Lord of the Conquerors, who is Undecaying, Immortal, Unperishing, Immutable and the Protector of those who have no protection!] —(Jaina Adoration.)

The *nirvāna* of a WORLD TEACHER is termed the fifth *kalyānaka* (auspicious event); and *devas* and men assemble to celebrate it. When Riṣabha Deva attained *nirvāna, devas* flocked on the Mount Kailāsa and celebrated the glorious Event in their usual manner. The bodies of the Perfect Ones are dispersed, like camphor, and only some hairs and nails are left behind. Indra collected the hairs and nails of Riṣabha Deva and created a body with his powers of illusion to resemble the Lord's. This body they cremated, and besmeared their own bodies with its ashes. They also cremated those *Gaṇadharas* and saints who had reached *nirvāna* with the Lord, in separate fires,

the memory of which Indra commended the men of the seventh and the higher *pratimās* (stages on the householder's path) to preserve by kindling three fires, the *Gārhapatya*, the *Paramāhavaniyaka* and the *Dakshināgni*. Great rejoicings and dancings took place on the occasion, as is the custom of the *devas*.

Bharata was, however, very disconsolate, and plunged in grief. He did not participate in the rejoicings in which men joined the *devas*.

Gaṇadhara (Apostle) Vriṣabha Sen saw him and spoke to him: "Surely, this is not an occasion for grief," said he, "for the Lord has gone to the everlasting Abode of the Immortals, which you and I even are also going to reach very soon!" After a while Bharata recollected himself, and, touching the Holy Feet of the Leader of Saints, proceeded to his kingdom. He lived for many years more in the world, but always filled with growing disgust for its toys and joys. At last one day he discovered a white hair in his head and taking it to be the messenger and herald of old age, immediately decided to leave the world. He appointed Aṛkakirti to succeed him, and became a saint. The effect of his growing *vairāgya* (detachment) immediately manifested itself in the form of Telepathy; and he even destroyed his inimical *Karmas* within an *antaramahurta* (less

than 48 minutes' time), attaining to omniscience, as the reward of his supreme sense of disgust for the world. He then moved about teaching and preaching the Noble Truth to the suffering humanity, and at last attained to the purity of Spiritual nature, that is *nirvāna*!

Bahūbali had already attained *Nirvāṇa* from the Mount Kailāsa, and Vriṣabha Sen, the Apostle, and the other Apostles and many of the Saints also attained *nirvāṇa* from different places on different dates. Those of the Holy Saints who did not reach *nirvāṇa* at once were reborn in heavens where also went the pious householders who followed the Lord Riṣabha Deva. The ladies of the *sangha* (community), too, re-incarnated in the heavens, according to their merit, and rid themselves of the female form! Many of them have already reached *nirvāṇa* in the ages that have flown by since! Others are bound to reach it for a certain ; for it is characteristic of the true *Dharma* (Religion) that whosoever is once moved by it, for howsoever fleeting a moment it might be, is sure to be attracted to the Right Path one day or another, and thus reach the GOAL of PERFECTION and JOY!

END



STATUE OF RIṢABHA DEVA IN THE MUSEE GUIMET IN PARIS (FRANCE)

ADORATION

Lord Riṣabha, Source of Wisdom, Revealer of Truth!
Divinity Incarnate, Perfection of the Divine in Man!
Endowed with Innate Greatness, invested with
Perfections Innumerable!
God of *devas*, God of gods!
Lord, Master, Protector of Living Beings!
Destroyer of Ignorance, Conqueror of Death!
By nature Intelligence, all-knowing Thou!
Consciousness Thy function, all-perceiving Thou!
Joy Thine attribute, all-happiness Thou!
In Power irresistible, all-powerful Thou!
The 'First-formed Father,' Teacher Divine!
The Founder of *Dharma*, thrice Worshipful Thou!
Revealer of the Path, Well-wisher of all!
Effulgence of Pure Spirit, Independent, Free!
Immortal, Fearless, Immutable, Immaculate!
With nothing left to accomplish, ever at Rest!
Guide, Master, Friend, the Best of the best!
Thou grantest no boons, yet men get the best of
gifts by worshipping Thee!
All troubles are ended by the mention of Thine
Holy name!
Afflictions fly away from Thy devotees in no time!
They who even salute Thine Statue's Feet
Obtain what none else can grant under the Sun—
The Gift of Life Eternal, Joy Inexhaustible,
Knowledge Infinite!
Whosoever cometh to lay his needs before Thee,
Himself becometh the Source of all Goodness and Good!
Grant, that is, let Thine adoration grant,
That the whole World should follow the
Truth thou taughtest in the Hoariest Past!

Amen!